



Volume 14 Issue 2

February, 2021



### Feature Stories

- Deputy Fire Marshal
- Probation
- RFA Information
- New Members
- RFA Invite to Public

### 2020 STATISTICS

Jan. 1 — Jan. 31

### District Average Response Time:

9 min. 47 sec.

### Responses by Type:

Fire: 8

EMS: 262

Other: 107

**Total: 377**

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*Proudly serving the communities of Blaine, Birch Bay, Custer, Laurel and the unincorporated areas of Lynden & Bellingham*

*“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”*

## NWFR Appoints Deputy Fire Marshal



*by DFM Joel Nielsen*

I am a fifth-generation Whatcom County resident. My great-great-grandparents settled on Dakota Creek in the late 1800s. The property that I reside on has been passed down from generation to generation and I feel very fortunate to still live on a piece of my family’s homestead.

I attended kindergarten through twelfth grade at Custer

Elementary, Vista Middle School, and Ferndale High School. At the age of fifteen during the school year, I worked at Mount Baker Lanes and spent many weekends competing in bowling tournaments. A large portion of my summers was spent working for local farmers bucking hay, collecting it from the fields, and stack up to 32,000 bales into barns and sheds.

Ten days after graduation, I found myself in basic training at Fort Dix New Jersey. After ten long weeks of having a very tall man wearing a brimmed brown hat yelling at me and telling me that everything I did wasn’t good enough, I received my first promotion, graduating top of



my class. I spent a couple of years in the U.S. Army and upon returning home in 1989, I joined the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 40 and signed up to be a volunteer firefighter with Fire District 13. Realizing how much more I loved the fire service than plumbing, I began testing for full-time positions up and down the

*continued on pg. 2*

## NWFR Members Complete Probationary Year

On January 6, all our current probationary firefighters completed their period of probation. This culminated with final testing that was a cumulative assessment of skills and experience they have learned over the past year. Each probationer was evaluated and passed by their peers.

Our four firefighters that successfully completed probation are:  
Philip Jackson  
Gary DeJager  
Chris Lubenow  
Alden Roberts

Congratulations are in order to all four of these firefighters. We look forward to a long career from each of them.

Special thanks to all of those that have been involved in the training and

development of these firefighters. Many people have stepped up and helped to coordinate trainings and evaluations for them over the span of the last year.



# New Member cont.

*continued from pg. 1*

Washington coast. I came close several times and although unsuccessful with the larger cities, in 1999 I landed a full-time firefighting job right here at home with Whatcom County Fire District 13 and the City of Blaine. After several years as a firefighter, I tested and obtained the officer rank of shift Lieutenant.



My wife Alisha and I met early in my firefighting career when she, following in her father's footsteps, also became a volunteer firefighter for North Whatcom Fire & Rescue. Alisha and I enjoy making improvements to our log home, gardening, playing on our tractor, and spending time with our pets. My hobbies include fishing, archery hunting, participating in shooting sports, and occasionally going for a casual ride on my motorcycle. I have three amazing children from a prior relationship that are all married, and I am anxiously looking forward to having grandchildren.

Since the beginning of my firefighting career, I have had an interest in the science of arson investigation and fire prevention-related activities. In early 2020, I became Deputy to the Fire Marshal and began taking classes including

arson investigation, plan review, fire safety inspection, alarm system testing, and interpreting the International Fire Code. Late 2020 brought the opportunity for me to promote to Deputy Fire Marshal and with my interest in fire prevention, accepting the position just seemed to be the logical next step in my career. I am looking forward to serving the citizens of North Whatcom and the City of Blaine for many more years to come.



*Please remember to keep the district up to date with any changes including your contact information.*

*All changes should be directed to Kelly.*

*These changes may include:*

*Phone*

*Address*

*Email*

*Family Additions*

*Name changes*



## NWFR Welcomes Four New Firefighters

Unconditional offers were made to four candidates after successful completion of all pre-employment screening requirements.

They officially started work on January 15. Three of the Probationary Firefighters headed off to the

Washington State Recruit Academy at North Bend on

January 27 and the fourth (a recent North Bend graduate) is assigned as fourth crewmember until he has been trained and ready to be assigned to a shift.

We wish them all a warm welcome and look forward to their contributions to our community!



**... enjoy the journey**

Evan Maack

Jackson Saylor

Seth Meredith

Patty McDermott



# Regional Fire Authority

## What is a Regional Fire Authority and why should I know about this?

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) and Whatcom County Fire District #4 (WCFD4) are exploring the potential of creating a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) to include both districts. An RFA is a special purpose district established by voters in a service area that provides funding for fire and emergency medical services. State law provides the framework for cities, towns, and/or fire districts and their voters to form an RFA as a way to gain service efficiencies through consolidation while retaining local control.

NWFR and WCFD4 have been operationally merged by contract for ten years. Creating an RFA will take this integration to the next level as a single unified agency. This will enable full consolidation of the two separate fire agencies and provide opportunities for efficiencies in delivery of fire and emergency services, protecting current service levels and response times.

First, participating agencies must agree on a plan for the RFA; that is the mission of the Planning Committee. The plan is due in April and is on schedule. The proposed plan must then be approved by the Boards of Commissioners of NWFR and WCFD4. If both Boards approve, then the commissioners would call for an election on the proposal. All voters in the pro-

posed service area would be eligible to vote on the proposition. The Planning Committee will set a firm election date if both fire commissions agree to move forward and place the measure on the August ballot.

If the RFA is approved by voters, firefighters and other staff from both NWFR and WCFD4 will become employees of the RFA. Similarly, the fire stations, fire trucks and other emergency response vehicles will become the responsibility of the RFA.

Forming the RFA would eliminate current WCFD4 fire and EMS levies and the NWFR fire levy, and replace them with a single RFA levy. This levy would be the same rate paid throughout the entire RFA. The RFA levy amount has not yet determined as it must be voter approved.

To encourage input into the RFA process, the Planning Committee will conduct public meetings to answer questions and get comments.

**The first opportunities are Thursday, February 18 at 3:00 pm and Tuesday, February 23 at 7:00 pm via Zoom.**

We hope you will join us at these links:

**February 18**

<https://zoom.us/j/95374295014>

**February 23**

<https://zoom.us/j/92101021486>

## Planning Committee Members

NWFR Commissioners

Bruce Ansell

John Crawford

Scott Fischer

Rich Bosman (*alternate*)

WCFD4 Commissioners

Dave Hanson

Harry Andrews

TBA — (*currently processing applications to fill vacant seat*)

If you have any questions or comment, please call Jennie Sand at 360-318-9933 or email info @nwfrs.com.

You may also go to <https://www.nwfrs.net/regional-fire-authority-planning-committee/>



## Events to Celebrate February Birthdays

- 5 — Paul Van Dyken
- 16 — Burr McPhail
- 19 — Rich Bosman
- 21 — Mel Mulligan
- 22 — Jeff Hofstad
- 23 — Darren Bruya
- 26 — Danny Jensen
- 27 — Shawn Atwood
- 27 — Philip Jackson



**NWFR Board Meetings may be conducted via Zoom Meeting/Webinar**

Thurs. February 18  
9408 Odell St 61  
Blaine — 1:00 p.m.





1507 E. Badger Rd.  
PO Box 286  
Lynden, WA 98264

*Providing quality service for  
a safe community*



**CPR / AED Classes  
2021**

Class will be held at various  
fire stations around the dis-  
trict. Check out

[https://www.nwfrs.net/res-  
ources/classes/](https://www.nwfrs.net/resources/classes/) for more

information and to reserve  
your spot.

*Donations of nonperishable food  
items are encouraged but not  
mandatory. All food donations  
will be forwarded to local area  
food banks.*



FOR THE SAFETY OF  
EVERYONE IN OUR  
COMMUNITY, ALL CPR  
CLASSES HAVE BEEN  
CANCELLED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE.

WE APOLOGIZE FOR  
ANY INCONVENIENCE



*Please join the Commissioners of North Whatcom Fire & Rescue  
and Whatcom County Fire District 4  
and  
Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen*

**For a virtual public meeting via Zoom**

**Your Fire Commissioners are exploring whether to ask  
voters to approve creation of a Regional  
Fire Authority to serve our communities.**

**Come learn why your Fire Commissioners are discussing this  
option and what could change if voters approve.**

**Sessions:**

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**February 23**

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