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THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF SOUTH KING FIRE & RESCUE

South King Fire & Rescue Sets Scoute Nite 2009



Save the Date!!
Wednesday, April 29 - 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

It's that time of year again! South King Fire and Rescue will host its annual Fire Station Nite for Scouts on Wednesday, April 29 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Headquarters Fire Station, located at 31617 1st Avenue South in Federal Way. All scouts living in the fire district are invited to attend!

"This is a great time for scouts of all ages to learn about what happens at a fire station," said Fire Chief Al Church. "It's a fun-filled event that we've hosted for over a decade."

Scouts can purchase a custom fit bike helmet for \$7, attend a bicycle safety class which will earn them a merit badge, learn about the Federal Way Police Bicycle Patrol, and parents can get a child ID. Guests will also be able to escape from a smoke-filled house, try on gear, climb aboard the fire engine and even munch on a hot dog served by the firefighters. Scout leaders are encouraged to bring their camera as there is sure to be great photo opportunities. A highlight of the evening will be a technical rescue presentation in which firefighters will demonstrate how they rescue people at high angles. The extrication team will also demonstrate how they take cars apart to rescue people after crashes. These teams are made up of specially trained firefighters and are an important piece in responding to emergencies. Presentations will be at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.

South King Fire and Rescue started Fire Station Nite as a way to provide a station tour to scouting groups interested in learning more about what firefighters do. This year, more than 400 scouts and adults are expected to attend. For more information and to sign your troop up, contact 253-946-7246.

Community Partner Helps Save Lives

Federal Way Lowe's Helps Launch New Smoke Alarm Program

Thanks to a very generous grant from community partner Lowe's, South King Fire & Rescue has 100 dual sensor smoke alarms to give to eligible district homeowners within the cities of Federal Way, Des Moines, and parts of unincorporated King County.

"We are pleased to have a partner like Lowe's to help support our mission to protect property and save lives," said Fire Chief Al Church.

One of the most important tools to help survive a fire in the home is a working smoke alarm, and since it's estimated that more than 2/3 of residential fire fatalities happen in homes where there is no working smoke alarm, this program is more important than ever.

"Having a smoke alarm simply isn't enough. People need to take the time to test them monthly and to practice their home escape plan. We hope fire never happens to anyone, but we want them to be prepared if it does," said the fire chief.

The donated smoke alarms are dual sensor, which detect both slow smoldering fire and hot, fast fire; this makes them an ideal fire prevention tool. A supply of alarms will be placed on the emergency vehicles so when South King Fire & Rescue crews find a need, they can install one immediately. Fire crews can also replace the batteries in smoke alarms as needed.

If you live within South King Fire & Rescue's district, and would like to see if you're eligible for the smoke alarm installation program, call 253-946-7337.

For more smoke alarm information and questions answered, see Page 3

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Sprinkler Systems Add Safety in Homes

At South King Fire & Rescue, we do our best to teach our community about ways to prevent fire. Sometimes even with the most caution, it may not be enough. According to the latest statistics from the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there were about 396,000 reported home fires in the United States in 2006, resulting in 2,580 deaths, 12,500 injuries and \$6.8 billion in direct damage.

Working smoke alarms and fire escape planning and practice are key to keeping families safe, but there is another element that you may want to add to your safety system – home fire sprinklers. In less time than it takes the fire department to arrive, properly-installed sprinklers can control and even extinguish a home fire. That not only reduces property damage, it saves lives.

Because fire sprinkler systems react so quickly, they can dramatically reduce the heat, flames and smoke produced in a fire. Fire sprinklers have been around for more than a hundred years, protecting commercial and industrial properties and public buildings, such as

hotels, hospitals and high-rises.

What most people don't realize is that the same lifesaving technology that protects these buildings is also available for homes, where 80 percent of all fire deaths occur. When sprinklers are present, the chances of dying in a fire are reduced by more than half and the average property loss is cut up to two-thirds, compared to fires where sprinklers are not present.

Sprinklers can be installed by specially trained contractors. The best time to install sprinklers is when you are building a new home or remodeling an existing home. Nationally, installing sprinklers adds between 1 and 1.5% to the total cost of construction. Installing sprinklers during remodeling, known as "retrofitting," generally costs more and depends on the existing structure.

Many insurance companies offer a range of discounts for homeowners with sprinkler systems, making comparison shopping worthwhile.

Home fire sprinklers give you added protection from fire and peace of mind. Ask your builder about installing sprinklers in your home. Free information for both builders and homeowners is available online at www.homefiresprinkler.org.



COMMON HOME SPRINKLER MYTHS

- ◆ **IT WILL GO OFF ACCIDENTALLY.** It is extremely rare for this to happen. In a typical home, water damage will be considerably less from unwanted sprinkler discharges than from other plumbing mishaps.
- ◆ **COOKING WILL SET IT OFF.** Cigar, cigarette smoke and burned toast cannot cause a sprinkler to operate. Only the high temperatures from fire will activate the sprinkler.
- ◆ **ALL THE SPRINKLERS WILL GO OFF IN THE ENTIRE HOUSE.** This scenario may be common in movies and TV shows, but it just isn't true for residential fire sprinkler systems. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire activates. Ninety percent of the time, one sprinkler contains the fire.

Your Fire Department In This Economy

South King Fire & Rescue recognizes the impact of the depressed economy that many public service agencies are facing. However, the funding for the fire department is secure through 2013 thanks to a voter approved 6-year-levy lid lift that allows the fire district to continue collecting property taxes at the current rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000.

In 2006, the citizens of Des Moines voted to merge their fire department with Federal Way, forming South King Fire & Rescue. The merger has enabled the department to eliminate redundant positions within the two departments and use funding to provide more emergency response services to the Cities of Federal Way, Des Moines, and parts of unincorporated King County. The Board of Commissioners at South King Fire & Rescue works regularly, with Chief Al Church, to identify more money saving ideas for the department and its citizens.

To accomplish an immediate savings, the District is actively looking to refinance the outstanding balance on the bonds approved by Des Moines voters in 1997. If this refinance effort proves to be beneficial to the financial interest of the District, then the citizens of Des Moines will directly benefit from the reduced interest costs.

While recognizing the uncertainty of the economy, the fire district is conscientiously making a comprehensive assessment of its capital needs for the near and long term future. The assessment includes a review of when emergency response apparatus will need to be replaced and how to get maximum life out of two aging fire stations (the district has eight stations total). South King Fire & Rescue regularly and efficiently maintains all of its apparatus and facilities exceedingly well; however, expanding service requirements, state mandates and the safety of personnel forces the department to make upgrades in an effort to keep pace with current standards.

New training standards and the requirements of new state and federal mandates for firefighters have stretched the current training facility to its limits and some training must now occur through alternate facilities which incur additional costs.

A review is underway of the department's current training facility to determine how to best meet the changing needs of the community and its firefighters and emergency medical technicians. Consideration is also being given to an upgraded Emergency Operations Center for the department to serve its citizens completely in the event of a disaster. A recent evaluation of the Des Moines Marina indicates that the current fire boat does not have adequate pumping capacity or rescue functions necessary to combat a fire in the marina. Alternative solutions are being considered to better protect that asset of the community and surrounding waterways.

The Board of Fire Commissioners at South King Fire & Rescue prides itself on meeting its fiduciary responsibility. The board directs Chief Church to be on the lookout for alternate funding sources. The department has been successful in obtaining federal grants to help fund many projects and will continue to pursue these avenues. Previous successes include: \$670,000 for Breathing Apparatus in 2003, \$206,000 for Wellness Fitness in 2004, \$60,000 for a Hazardous Materials Unit also in 2004, and \$494,000 for Emergency Operations in 2005.

South King Fire & Rescue worked diligently for several years to improve department service through staffing, equipment, and response capabilities and were rewarded in 2005 when a Class 2 insurance rating was obtained recognizing the increased capabilities. This greatly benefits the business community of Federal Way through reduced insurance costs. This was a difficult task to accomplish and the department carries the distinction proudly. The goal now is to bring that success to the City of Des Moines by working hand in hand with the City and the water district to attain that Class 2 insurance rating there as well.

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SMOKE ALARMS

What You Need to Know

WHY SHOULD I HAVE SMOKE ALARMS?

Smoke alarms are the best protection from fire. They provide an early warning signal in order for you and your family to escape.

WHAT TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are many different brands of smoke alarms, but there are two basic types – ionization and photoelectric.

Ionization alarms are the most common and least expensive. They sound faster when there is a flaming, fast moving fire. *Photoelectric alarms* are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires. There are also *dual sensor alarms* that combine ionization and photoelectric into one unit. South King Fire & Rescue recommends installing dual sensor alarms since both types of alarms are better at detecting different fires and we don't know what type of fire might start in a home. In addition to the basic types of alarms, there are alarms made to meet the needs of people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may use strobe lights and flash and/or vibrate to alert those who are unable to hear standard smoke alarms.

WHERE DO I PUT THEM?

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. We recommend installing smoke alarms in both inside and outside sleeping areas.

ARE SMOKE ALARMS HARD TO INSTALL?

If your smoke alarms are hard wired, or operate off electricity, you will need to have a qualified electrician do the initial installation or install replacements. For battery powered smoke alarms, all you will need for installation is a screw driver. For all smoke alarm installations, be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions. If you are uncomfortable standing on a ladder, ask a relative, friend or neighbor for help.

HOW DO I KEEP MY SMOKE ALARM WORKING?

The batteries need to be replaced at least once a year and the whole unit should be replaced every 8-10 years. Some smoke alarms are powered by long-lasting batteries and are designed to replace the entire unit according to manufacturer's instructions. In hard-wired, battery back up smoke alarms, batteries still need to be replaced once a year.

The fire department recommends testing all smoke alarms once a month and writing the purchase date with a marker on the inside of the alarm so you will know when to replace it.

WHAT IF THE SMOKE ALARM GOES OFF WHILE I'M COOKING?

Then it's doing it's job. Do not disconnect your smoke alarm if it goes off when cooking or other non-fire causes. Clear the air by waving a towel near the alarm, leaving the batteries in place. The alarm may need to be moved to a new location. Some models even have a "hush" button that silences nuisance alarms.

NET Prepares Neighborhoods for Disaster

Winter may be behind us, but that doesn't mean it's time to stop thinking about disaster preparedness. Earthquakes can happen at any time of the year, anywhere.

South King Fire & Rescue, in conjunction with the Des Moines Police Department launched Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) classes for the citizens of Des Moines, in January. The NET classes provide guidelines for personal and neighborhood preparedness.

Experience shows that after a major disaster, especially an earthquake, there will not be enough police, fire, emergency medical, or disaster relief personnel to take care of everyone's needs as quickly as the cities would like.

Like a Block Watch program, the NET program encourages neighbors to work together. Participants will be familiar with critical responsibilities before a disaster and will not waste precious time during a disaster trying to figure out what to do. The four classes include personal/household preparedness, neighborhood disaster planning, identification of neighborhood concerns, and a team drill. Each component is an hour to two hours in length, depending on the number of participants. Information and scheduling can be adjusted to meet the needs of the group.

For more information about the program in Des Moines, please contact Kory Batterman at 206-870-7617.

The City of Federal Way continues to offer the NET program. They also host Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes each year to give people a more in depth training in disaster response. This program is open to anyone and costs \$25. For more information regarding these programs in the City of Federal Way, please contact the coordinator at 253-835-2652.

CodeRed Debuts By Calling You

Don't hang up the phone – it's not a solicitor, it's your fire department calling! In January 2008 South King Fire & Rescue, City of Federal Way, Lakehaven Utility District, and Federal Way Police Department jointly purchased an emergency telephone calling system called Code Red. Some may have already received a call from the system to remind families that fireworks are illegal in the district or to change smoke alarm batteries.

Its main use is to alert the community in times of emergencies or pending emergencies. Each agency can use it to issue alerts as they see necessary. The communities of Federal Way, Des Moines, and parts of unincorporated King County are all covered under this system, but it's only as good as its database. To make sure you receive these important alerts, people should register with our CodeRed system with the main phone line, especially if it is unlisted, cell phones and e-mail addresses. Business are also encouraged to sign up.

Code RED® Emergency Telephone Calling System is an extremely high-speed telephone communication service available for emergency notifications. CodeRED® employs a one-of-a-kind Internet mapping capability for geographic targeting of calls. It uses a high speed telephone calling system capable of delivering customized pre-recorded emergency messages directly to homes and businesses at the rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. For more information and to sign up, visit www.southkingfire.org.

Firefighters Honored for Rescue



Firefighters were honored at the March Board of Commissioners meeting for their outstanding service and quick thinking during an apartment fire on December 21, 2008. Firefighter Brian Moore, Lieutenant Gordy Goodsell, Firefighters Anthony John, Craig Burris, Chris Andersen and Bruce Hubbard rescued seven people from a burning apartment during the December winter storm.

Do you meet these qualifications? If so, South King Fire & Rescue wants to talk to you!



- *At least 60 years of age*
- *Live independently*
- *Have fallen in the past year or at risk from falling*
- *Want to learn more about preventing injuries at home*
- *Live within the fire district*

South King Fire & Rescue created the fall prevention program to teach people what causes falls, but more importantly, how to prevent them and improve the quality of life for older adults. A public education officer from the fire department will visit your home to do a safety assessment. We will talk with you about the reasons why falls happen and give you ideas on how to reduce injuries at home, as well as provide risk reduction devices if needed.

WHY DO WE OFFER THIS PROGRAM? Falls by older adults can have significant consequences. Many falls just cause minor bruises, scrapes or embarrassment and are not even reported to a health agency. But about 1 in 10 falls among older adults leads to broken bones or other serious injuries. About 1 in 40 who falls will be hospitalized.

Falls can be fatal for the elderly. In King County, falls are the leading cause of injury and death for people 65 years and older according to the Emergency Medical Services Trauma Registry. Nationally, the NCIPC reports that one out of four people who fall and break a hip die within six months and another 25% need lifelong care. The number of fall-related deaths are believed to be underestimated because falls are often not listed as the primary cause of death. Even if they are not fatal, falls can seriously disrupt the life of the elderly, their caregivers and family. Fifty percent of the fall injuries that require hospitalization result in the person being discharged to a nursing home. Falls often create a vicious cycle. Fear of falling leads to restriction of movement and activities. This restriction of mobility limits the social network and results in social isolation. Isolation can lead to depression. The factors of reduced mobility, isolation and depression can actually cause more falls.

Simple lifestyle or environmental adjustments can often prevent falls. That is why South King Fire & Rescue offers this program. By going beyond providing information, we can actually provide and install safety devices in your home to reduce the risk of falling.

THERE IS NO COST TO PARTICIPATE. However, supplies of devices are limited and dependent on donations. The grant-funded program is provided as a community service of South King Fire & Rescue. Grants from private donations fund the program and the devices installed free of charge. Please call 253- 946-7337 to schedule your home safety survey.

What YOU Can Do

- ✓ Have your vision checked
- ✓ Begin a regular exercise program
- ✓ Make your home safer
- ✓ Have your healthcare provider review your medicines

SOUTH KING FIRE & RESCUE

Headquarters

31617 1st Avenue South – Federal Way, WA 98003



Contact Information

Emergency.....9-1-1
 Headquarters/Administrative Offices.....253-839-6234
 Fire Prevention.....253-946-7248

www.southkingfire.org

Your Guide to Senior Transportation, Activities, Meals and Other Services

Federal Way Senior Center
 253-838-3604, www.federalwayseniorcenter.org

City of Federal Way Community Center & Senior Center
 253-835-6900, www.cityoffederalway.com

Des Moines Activity Center
 206-878-1642, www.desmoineswa.gov

Senior Services of King County
 206-448-5740, www.seniorservices.org

Healthy Aging Partnership
 888-4ELDERS, www.4elders.org

Adult Protective Services
 866-221-4909

Elder Watch Launches in Des Moines

A new program to assist older adults is now available in Des Moines. The Elder Watch Advocacy Program works to make sure adults in later life can live in safety, dignity and respect. The overall mission is to help victims of elder abuse and neglect by providing resources and support.

“The advocacy program is designed to help the victims that may fall through the cracks and truly need help,” said co-directors Don Harper and Wayne Corey.

Elder abuse exists in secretive and ignored situations. By simply recognizing it exists, knowing the signs of abuse, and reporting it, you can make a difference. The Elder Watch program runs strictly on volunteers and help from the fire department’s Aid Fund, South King Firefighters Foundation and the Des Moines Legacy Foundation.

The Des Moines Senior Advisory Committee, the Enhanced Public Safety Committee, along with your police and fire departments encourage the program in an effort to increase public awareness and reduction of elder abuse cases in the community. For more information, call 253-946-7338 or visit www.publicsafe.org.

