



## Message from Fire Chief Dave Kraski

Summer 2025



One of the things I value most about this newsletter is the opportunity to connect with you —our community—and to thank you for supporting your fire authority.

I also want to take a moment to explain how we fund the different parts of our service. Daily operations are funded by our fire levy. This includes our firefighters and paramedics, emergency medical services (which make up 84% of our calls), training, apparatus, equipment, and supplies.

The fire levy accounts for more than 60% of our operating budget. Levy rates decrease as property values rise to ensure we collect roughly the same amount of revenue that voters previously approved. For example, voters passed a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2020. As property values have gone up, that rate has dropped to \$1.32.

We are asking voters to restore the levy to \$1.50 during the August 5, 2025 primary election. This 18-cent increase would fund critical needs over the next six years: six additional firefighters to reduce response times, one new ambulance per year, two fire engines, and the refurbishment of our ladder truck for multi-story emergencies. The lid lift would cost \$18 per \$100,000 of a property's assessed value. For example, the owner of a \$500,000 home would pay an additional \$7.50 per month or \$90 per year.

Capital projects, such as fire stations, are funded separately through bonds. These facilities are just as essential as staffing. We can't run a fire station 24/7 without a place for firefighters to eat and sleep—and we need proper decontamination areas to wash off harmful chemicals and carcinogens after calls. These facilities directly affect the safety and well-being of our personnel.

As always, I'm always available to answer questions or concerns. Thank you for partnering with us to save lives and property.

## Make a Splash the Smart Way

Whether you're boating, swimming, or just dipping your toes in, we want you to have fun and stay safe! Here are a few water-wise tips to keep in mind:

- Wear a lifejacket. Yes – even if you are a strong swimmer! Lifejackets save lives whether you're on a boat or in the water.
- Never swim solo. Bring a buddy! It's safer and way more fun.
- Watch for hazards. Stay clear of strong currents, deep drop-offs, and hidden obstacles.
- Be wary of cold water. Lakes and rivers can be icy cold – even in summer! Cold shock or hypothermia can affect you quickly.
- Designate a water watcher. Drowning is quick and silent. Always have someone keeping an eye on swimmers.



Let's make every summer adventure a safe one!



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## NCRFA Ramps Up Water Rescue Readiness

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With summer approaching, North County Regional Fire Authority wants residents to know that water rescue season is in full swing—and our team is ready. Each day, three to six trained rescue swimmers are on duty, supported by a organization-wide commitment to water rescue training.

All members of NCRFA are trained to assist in water rescues. Some support from shore or assist with swift and surface water operations, while those with advanced training serve as rescue swimmers and divers. These responders wear wetsuits, masks, and snorkels to search rivers, lakes, and parts of the Puget Sound—sometimes as deep as 20 feet, in areas too dangerous or inaccessible for boats. Rescues under submerged stumps or debris require specialized skills to avoid putting rescuers at risk.



Each rescue swimmer keeps their gear with them and can respond from any station, allowing rapid coverage across the district without waiting for a full team. NCRFA also partners with neighboring agencies and uses specialized equipment like hovercraft when needed. Joint training and annual skills demonstrations keep teams sharp and coordinated.

“Most of the calls we receive during summer months are for floating,” said Captain Kirk Normand. “People go unprepared, without the necessary equipment to stay safe, they get lost, or they get stuck on debris.”

With the right training and public awareness, the Fire Authority is working to keep every waterway—and everyone on it—safe this summer.