

## **Getting to Know Klickitat County EMS District No. 1**

In an effort to maintain transparency and accountability with our taxpayers and the citizens we serve, our continuous assessment of the 2018 levy goals and objectives are the topic of this article. Thanks to the voters for supporting the levy, which is a large part of the ambulance district's funding. We have accomplished many of the goals we set.

The first goal was to establish financial stability for the district, replacing outdated equipment and implementing an ambulance replacement rotation. Four new "power-load" gurneys have been purchased and installed. Three new heart monitor/defibrillators have been purchased and replaced outdated equipment. Three new ventilators were purchased and allow us to take very critical patients on life support to higher level-of-care hospitals.

Three ambulances were retrofitted onto new chassis in 2018-2019. One new ambulance was added to our fleet in 2020, one ambulance was ordered and is being built as of this writing, to be delivered at the beginning of 2025, and another has been ordered to be delivered shortly thereafter. We have also implemented a hearty preventative maintenance program for the ambulances ensuring they have a long life serving our county.

The second and fourth goals were both related to improving the pay and benefits package for employees, including paid annual required training. Many of our paramedics commute up to four hours due to the unaffordability of living in Klickitat County. This should help attract and retain quality paramedics and EMTs and encourage them to make Klickitat County their home.

Having been understaffed since before 2018, we are bringing our paramedic staffing up to the minimum level for the three full-time ambulances. We believe we achieved this goal with our latest negotiated contract and paid online training with quarterly in-person skills maintenance classes.

The third goal was the staffing of a fourth ambulance to meet the ever-increasing 911 emergency call volume, and to better facilitate transfers of patients from our local hospitals to higher level-of-care hospitals. This requires hiring more employees, which we believe we will be able to achieve with the new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) now in place.

The last goal of the EMS District was to outfit the Mass Casualty Incident trailer we have with the required equipment to handle multiple patient incidents such as train derailments, school shootings, etc. The trailer has been inventoried, and items are currently being replaced or updated.

In conclusion, we have fully accomplished most of our goals and continue to work towards the completion of those still in progress. Our 2018 levy continues to serve the citizens of Klickitat County well and we appreciate all the community support we have received.

**KCEMS1 fun fact:** Our oldest in-service ambulance is from 2010. Our highest mileage ambulance has well over 215,000 miles. These are not the same ambulance.

**KCEMS1 monthly safety tip:** March happens to be National Ladder Safety month and Brain Injury Awareness month. Brain Injury is one of the most common injuries due to falls. Falls from ladders are just one type of fall. We want to remind everyone of some basic ladder safety.

Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, on the ladder. Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface. Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top. Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom.

Have a safe month!