

2022 Annual Report



**Snohomish County
Fire District 21**

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Snohomish County Fire District 21

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April 13, 2023

To The Honorable Board of Fire Commissioners:

I am very pleased to be able to present to you the District's first annual report, which is an effort to capture a summary of the events and activities that have occurred in and around the District during the previous year. My hope is that the information provided will be of value to the Commissioners and the public.

Since I became Fire Chief for the District in March of 2017 many changes have occurred, and many of those I am proud to be a part of as I see this agency headed in a positive direction. Since my hiring, we have had an increase in emergency calls of over 60%. I am confident these annual reports will assist in our efforts to be informative, transparent, accountable, and contribute to creating a history we will be proud of.

Respectfully,

Chad Schmidt

Chad Schmidt
Fire Chief

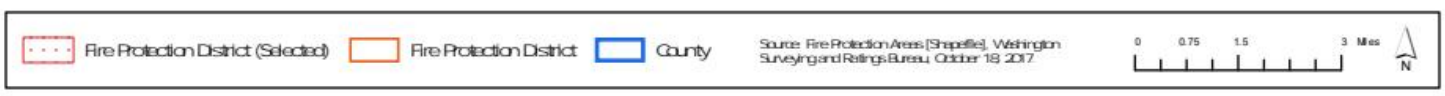
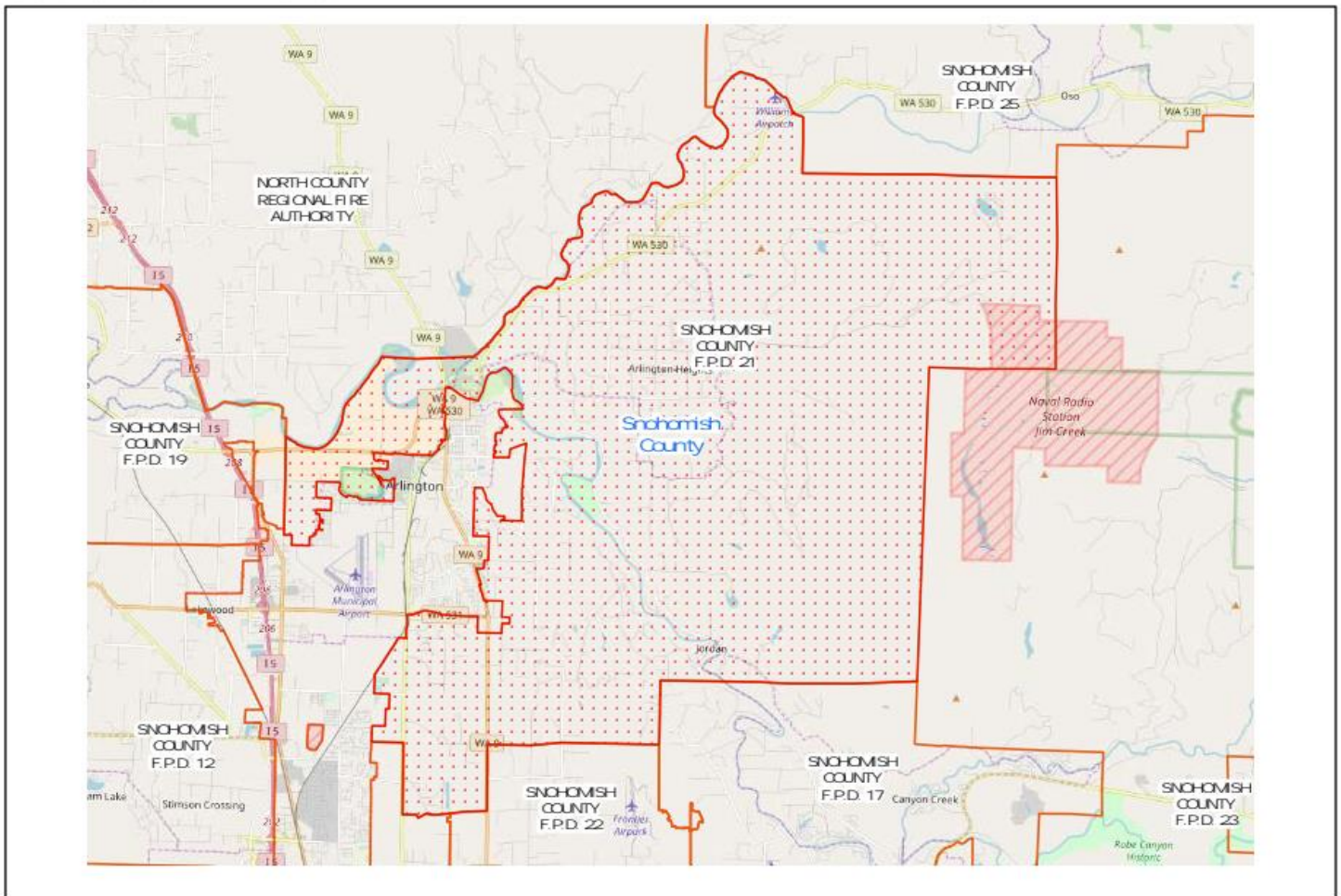
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District Overview

District Map

SNHOMISH COUNTY F.P.D. 21 (Unincorporated Portion Only) SNHOMISH COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 21



Brief History

Snohomish County Fire Protection District 21 was established through a special election vote held on October 25, 1960, with Lewis Rylie, Martin O’Sullivan, and Clifford Rod elected as the first Commissioners presiding over the governance of the District. The District began wholly contracting fire and emergency services with the City of Arlington until the District was able to build its own station, Station 49, completed in 1975.

Station 49, located at 12131 228th St NE, continues to serve the northern portion of the District. The station originally was built with 2 truck bays, an office area, and bathrooms. In 1987 the station had 2 additional truck bays built on to house apparatus that were being

parked outside. In 1996 another addition was constructed to both sides of the station to incorporate laundry and storage areas, a water treatment system, a generator room, and a meeting room.

After many years of debating the need for a new station in the southern portion of the District, studying the feasibility, and then a search for available properties, in 2018 a 5-acre property was purchased for a new fire station (Station 50) along McElroy Rd. An architect was then hired to develop plans for Sta. 50 and the plans were put out for contractor bid in 2022. Unfortunately, the lowest bid came in over \$1.6M over budget. Despite efforts to reduce costs with the architect, these plans were deemed unworkable to build. Then a property across the street, with established buildings, was discovered to be available for purchase and a deal was negotiated to improve the property to make it workable for use as a fire station for substantially less cost than building a new one. This property's acquisition is expected to close by summer 2023.

Introduction

SCFD 21 (Snohomish County Fire District 21) is comprised of Rural, Suburban, and Forestry Communities. It is divided into two service areas by the city of Arlington and the Stillaguamish River. Station 49 serves the north area and Station 50 serves the south area. In 2022 the northern District accounted for approximately 54% of the assessed value and population and the southern District accounted for 43%. There is a small Western portion of the District, extending out towards Island Crossing, accounting for approximately 3%. The District is approximately 70 sq. miles in size, one of the largest Districts in Snohomish County, and has an assessed property value of \$1,609,887,923 in 2022. The total population of the District has approximately 9,834 residents with 6,310 registered voters.

In 2021 SCFPD 21 began providing BLS transport services to the entire fire district and Oso. SCFD 21 and the North County were in negotiations for ALS service to be provided to SCFD 21 through 2025.

The Board of Commissioners consisted of:

Position 1: Commissioner Eric Nordstrom – serving since 2012

Position 2: Commissioner Dave Safford – serving since 2018

Position 3: Commissioner Ed Taft – serving since 2018

Administrative Staff:

Fire Chief – Chad Schmidt (hired 2017)

Finance Director – Jasmine Perez (hired 2022)

Administrative Assistant - Megan Linklater (hired 2022)

¹ = from 2017 estimate of total population by Washington's Office of Financial Management

² = from Snohomish County Auditor's 2017 election validation figures

Work Force

The Fire Chief position remains under contract with Chad Schmidt through 2030. In 2022, the District created a new Finance Director position, and hired Jasmine Perez. The new Finance Director position is being shared with other local fire departments (Tulalip and Camano Is.) with FD21 handling the primary contract for this position. Also in 2022, we hired a new Administrative Assistant Megan Linklater after the retirement of Darla Tiner (previous Admin. Asst.).

Operationally the District has 3 administrative staff, 7 career firefighters, 8 volunteer firefighters, and 29 part paid firefighters.

Department Events

SCFD 21 started the year by receiving the findings from the 2020-2021 State audit. The findings of the audit were dealt with by the board and new fire chief. The District started 2021 with the 3 commissioners, 9 volunteers, a full-time Chief, a part-time Secretary and full time Finance Director. 2020-2021 in the November general election Dave Safford and Eric Nordstrom won re-election. The Part Paid program continued to change when many part paid left after receiving full-time firefighting jobs at other departments. Station 49 in Arlington Heights housed 1 engine, 1 ambulance, 1 tender, and the ATV/Hovercraft. Leased property housed Units at a temporary Station 50 and Fire protection and BLS service was given to the south District for the first time in 62 years. NCRFA and Arlington Fire merged and so NCRFA was the provider of ALS service for District 21 ending a long-standing relationship between the City of Arlington and Snohomish County Fire District 21.

SCFD 21 remained an active member of the Stillaguamish Swiftwater Rescue Team. Department members continued to expand their training and District 21 is the main department operating the team. District 21 also responded to over 6 wildland fires all over Washington, Oregon, and California. Jim Creek Naval Station was the fire that took the most resources mostly because it was in the District and had a direct impact on our citizens. It lasted over a week and caused the relationship between the Navy and District 21 to grow.

SCFD21 started the Santa run this year which was a huge success and allowed crews to visit neighborhoods and hand out candy canes while the public saw Santa and its firefighters. We also held an open house and pancake breakfast which were both heavily attended in Arlington Heights.

Department Mission

The Fire Chief was tasked with three main missions in 2021:

- 1) First to secure constant staffing for the District that was consistent and reliable. This was done through hiring and proactive scheduling.
- 2) Second to negotiate the ALS contract between NCRFA and Fire District 21. An agreement was reached in early 2022 but NCRFA decided to not follow through on the agreement. There was a rift between Administrations and the fire district took the stance that NCRFA was using incorrect information to arrive at their numbers. Negotiations are still ongoing at this time.
- 3) Third to continue to work on response times and staffing increases to meet the NFPA recommendation of 4 firefighters on a fire engine. This would require the levy that failed in 2021 to be passed at \$1.30/1000 in 2022. This levy later failed in 2022 by just over 3%.

Station Staffing/Equipment

Station 49 Staffed 24hrs. 7 days (Crew of 2-3 cross staffed)

Aid 49, Engine 49, Tender 49, ATV 49, Hovercraft 49

Station 50 staffed 24hrs. 7 days a week. Leasing property from a citizen on Burn Rd and later on McElroy Rd. crew of 2 cross staffed between Tender Engine 50 and Aid 50.

Training

Fire Training began with a new schedule and Lt Nunemaker. A new training group called the North Snohomish Joint Training Group or "JTG" was formed and consists of Districts 21, 24, 25, 22, 19, 15, and 17. This group has been amazing in their forward thinking and ability to provide much needed structure and support for training. Tuesday night drills became more organized and a training schedule was followed. Brian Price led EMS training as the MSA and was helpful in coordinating training between Medic Units and on duty staff. EMTs received real world training and valuable call reviews from them.

Call Response Times

The average response time for calls within SCFD 21 was 07:02 for an apparatus to arrive on scene. 90% of the time units arrived within 13:06 of being dispatched.

The average time for units in District 21 to depart the station was 01:31 after being notified by dispatch. 90% of the time units were en-route within 02:27 of dispatch.

Call Volumes

In 2022 The Fire District ran 1501 calls of which 65% were EMS related and 35% were fire or rescue. The average response time was 10:16 from Call time. 902 of these calls were in Fire District 21 and 599 were mutual aid calls.

WSRB Rating

The Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) sets the most common standard for evaluation and rating of fire protection coverage for use by insurance underwriters to determine the exposure risk for fire damage/loss. The WSRB rating ultimately determines a very significant portion for how much someone pays for homeowners insurance.

A significant milestone was reached in 2022 when it was learned that the review of the Fire District's fire protection capabilities done by the WSRB resulted in an improvement of the Protection Class rating to Protection Class 4 for dwellings or businesses within 5 miles of a recognized responding fire station.

The WSRB survey is not conducted for property loss prevention or for life safety purposes. The purpose was to gather information needed to determine a fire insurance relevant Public Protection Classification that may be used to develop fire insurance rates or costs. The evaluation criteria incorporate many nationally recognized standards, such as those developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The implementation of the lower insurance rates associated with the new protection class rating were implemented in February of this year.

There were several key factors related to the improved Protection Classification. They include:

- 1) A change in the requirements that a residence must be within 5 miles of a fire station. The new requirement allows for credit when a residence is within 5 to 7 miles of the fire station.
- 2) The inter-local agreements between our neighboring fire districts and city establishing that the fire departments automatically respond to any fire in our District whenever there is a fire.
- 3) The ongoing combined training of the neighboring fire districts.
- 4) The new location of Station 50 and the quicker response from those units

The District then requested an additional evaluation of its water delivery capabilities in the rural areas in the hope of improving the Protection Class Rating for those not served by an approved water distribution. This is known as a "Tender Credit." The features to be evaluated for Tender Credit includes response, staffing, and developing an uninterrupted flow of 250 gallons per minute for 30 minutes. The application for Tender Credit evaluation was filed with the WSRB and the evaluation was successfully completed in September 2021, resulting in a better rating for those who live further from a fire station. WSRB Tender Credit applies to dwelling

properties located within 7 road miles of a responding fire station but not having a standard fire hydrant within 1000 feet. Dwellings that meet these conditions receive a Protection Class 6.

Goals for 2023

The Fire District has established three goals for 2023

- 1) Continue to receive grants to replace outdated equipment and apparatus. Due to financial restraints, this is the only way to receive new and dependable equipment.
- 2) Work on communication with the public to show staffing and levy increase needs. Be involved with community events and host open houses and other events for the public to see the firehouse.
- 3) Continued high level training for firefighters, EMT's and volunteers. This along with outside training is crucial to the success and overall morale of the department and its community.

Summary

2022 was a year of significant changes and progress for SCFD 21. A new fire Station and response began and a 60 year history of dependence was broken. The "south " District finally had its own Station and a dedicated response unit.

Community involvement was essential in the growth of SCFD 21 and its success. New voices and ideas helped the BOC to push past prior issues for SCFD 21 and its trust within the community. Training was increased and became more productive at all levels. SCFD 21 once again became a leader among its neighbors and established its positive reputation for training and community involvement. The entire Community once again has a FD that is the heartbeat of its community.

Reference Documents

ESO Call Summary Reports

The Average en-route time for units in District 21 was 01:31

90% of the time units were en-route within 02:47 of dispatch

The Average Response time In SCFD 21 was 7:02.

90% percent of the time units arrived within 13:06 of dispatch.