



## **BROWNS POINT / DASH POINT FIRE DEPARTMENT PIERCE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #13**

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### **BUSINESS PLAN**

revised July 2020

#### **FIRE DISTRICT SUMMARY**

Pierce County Fire District 13 began in the early 1900's to provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) to the Browns Point and Dash Point communities. The first documented photos are from 1925. Washington State Fire Districts were enacted in 1950, and our Browns Point Dash Point Fire District 13 was officially formed in 1951 as the 13<sup>th</sup> Fire District in Pierce County. Starting as a fully volunteer fire department, it has grown with the community to a larger number of volunteer firefighters (FF) and emergency medical technicians (EMT), and a few paid staff members, now serving a response district of approximately 1,100 households. We have an on-duty crew of three or more firefighters/EMT's on a 24/7/365 basis. We continually recruit and train new firefighters/EMTs for service within our community and the region. Many of our trained recruits go on to become career firefighters employed throughout the United States.

#### **Our Mission Statement**

*In partnership with the community we serve, we create a safer fire district by providing quality Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) protecting the lives, property and environment of our citizens.*

**Vision** - To be highly regarded by our community as a first-rate, county fire department, offering unparalleled service.

**Values** – Knowledge, professionalism, respectfulness, integrity, teamwork, service, accountability, stewardship and innovation.

**Meets Standards of Coverage** - Standards of coverage is a term referencing an industry standard of response. It refers to the time to respond, number of responders, response equipment, backup plan, training of responders, supervision, and safety of responders. PCFD#13 meets a standard of coverage within industry standards and exceeds our historic expectations of our volunteers of years past. This Department has an enthusiastic presence at community events and provides Public Education in CPR, school visits and preschool education. On duty crews maintain equipment, train, study, are present in the community, and respond competently. We are dispatched by South Sound 911. We actively participate in all Pierce County Fire, EMS and Department of Emergency Management organizations and committees.

## **SERVICES, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

We provide fire suppression, basic life-saving emergency medical assistance, transport to hospitals, mutual aid to area fire departments, wildland fire-fighting, water rescue, disaster support, fire inspections, home safety checks, training of recruits and individual and community assistance. We engage with the community to provide fire, medical, home and personal safety education to adults and youth as well as participate in community events. We have well-trained and motivated leadership and staff, well maintained equipment, and excellent response times of normally five minutes or less.

### **Facilities & Equipment**

- 2 fire stations (Browns Point, #77, and Dash Point, #76)
  - One staffed with volunteer crew of 3 or more 24x7x365
- 2 fire engines
- 1 BLS (Basic Life Saving) ambulance
- 1 operational support truck
- 1 brush truck/type 6 fire engine
- 3 command vehicles
- 1 water rescue vessel

## **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

Fire District leadership consists of the Chief, Training Captain, Battalion Chief, two Captains, five Lieutenants, approximately 40 Volunteer Firefighters/EMT's, which includes resident firefighters at the Browns Point station, a Public Information Officer and a part time administrative position. Current staff members are updated on the website *piercefirer13.org*.

**Supervision:** Supervision is accomplished by a full-time Chief and a full-time Training Captain. A part-time administrator maintains training records and academy tests, personnel records and payroll, along with records for a couple of academies per year with another 15-20 individual's attendance and tests. To keep the public informed, the PIO (Public Information Officer) maintains the website, updating content, and addresses periodic public communications. There is a cadre of volunteer officers who supervise several projects, programs and daily operations. Officers earn their promotions by outstanding performance, leadership, and longevity with the department.

**Recruiting** - We recruit and educate volunteer firefighters to fill positions opened by current volunteers accepting new challenges or career positions. Recruitment is done at schools, community colleges and vocational schools by keeping in touch with their management and arranging annual meetings with students. We promote high standards in our recruit application packet to ensure we receive quality applicants. Our volunteers come from all over the area and receive a small stipend.

**Training:** We provide thorough industry standard fire and rescue training for our volunteers (400 hours in the first year alone). We continually update our training to reflect changes within the industry and updates to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Our emergency medical personnel are trained to national standards and both the Washington State Department of Health and Pierce County standards. We are one of only five Pierce County Fire Districts that accept

volunteers, and one of two that puts on fire academies to train our new members. The fire service remains a popular career choice, so we have a steady number of applications (not all qualifying to become volunteers).

**Support:** We mentor volunteer firefighters for position promotions within Pierce County Fire District 13. As gaps are created when volunteers resign due to career job opportunities or other challenges, the remaining volunteers are given additional shifts to ensure coverage 24/7. Volunteers nearing completion of their academy training are given opportunity to begin working with the team to enable them to provide additional assistance. Promotions are earned by worthy volunteer candidates for leadership positions on the team. Our standard of coverage is one on-duty officer and three crew members.

## **BUSINESS MODEL**

### **Essential Elements**

We attract men and women who seek careers in the Fire Service and provide the training and organizational structure for them to succeed. We set a high bar for those accepted into our department, we require commitment and loyalty, we coach for success, and we are flexible but firm in requiring shifts of work. We pay only a stipend, and we encourage competition and testing for paid, full-time career positions with fire departments in the Puget Sound area, and around the country. On an annual basis, 15% to 20% of our volunteers are hired into career positions at other fire departments.

### **Financial Plan**

We judiciously steward the funds provided by our community taxpayers to train volunteers and operate a community involved fire department invested in protecting the lives, property and environment of our local citizens. Finances are a mix of property tax, special levy bonds and taxes. Expenses are carefully critiqued to ensure it is a necessary operating expense. We apply for various grants available and have been fortunate to have received several past grants. Building material donations help to keep our training budget down as the need is constant for fire training, and for various building situations with fire, smoke and safety.

Additional funds are generated from fees for non-department “academy” participants, DNR deployments of personnel and equipment, and grant funds for equipment. Each year we review current year expenditures for creating the following year’s budget, including known increases to help ensure we operate within our allocated budget. Annual budget items are paid from property taxes at a rate per thousand for fire and a separate rate per thousand for EMS. Our three elected Fire Commissioners review all deposits and payments for approval, along with the annual budget and all resolutions. **Solid Infrastructure & Grant Awards** - We have existing infrastructure. In the days of neighborhood volunteers, the model was to station equipment and gear in locations near volunteers so with only a short response time they could reach their gear and respond to the emergency. In a very small district, we have two fire stations and a serviceable fleet of vehicles. We have received many grants for equipment. With our training and high turnover, we use and wear out Personal Protective Equipment at a higher rate than our call volume would indicate. Federal government grants in the post-911 eras have made monies available to sustain a localized response to emergencies. We have been successful at writing and securing grants to augment our budget (although grants also require us to contribute / spend money).

### **Evaluating Success**

We evaluate our success by the following:

- The availability of well-trained volunteers to staff the department 24/7/365
- Leadership that is respected by our community and our volunteers
- Equipment that is well maintained and representative of a well-run department
- Involvement in community events
- Interest from other volunteer fire departments in our high-quality training
- The success of our volunteers attaining their career goals
- Grants awarded
- Community feedback
- Meeting statutory requirements

### **Performance Standards**

- Minimum of three department personnel per call.
- Response time of less than five minutes.
- Meet the minimum number of hours per Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for online and physical training.
- Meet firefighter’s turnout industry standards (don both Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)).

### **Conclusion – Our existing business model continues to be successful.**

Our organization serves our taxpaying residents, and the regional fire and EMS community within Pierce County and the State of Washington. It is dependent on a steady stream of willing volunteers, good leadership, good training and community support. To ensure continued support we need to be good stewards of the taxpayer’s money, be forward-thinking and community-service oriented. In partnership with our community, our program will continue to be sustainable and successful.