

Clallam County Fire District 3

History of the Fire Service in the Sequim Dungeness Valley

By Stephen S. Vogel, Fire Chief Retired

In the spring of 1948, home owners of the east end agreed that a fire district should be formed. The Sequim Prairie Grange circulated a petition asking the county commissioners to grant such a district. The boundaries of the new fire District extended from Dungeness Bay on the north to the Agnew Irrigation District on the south, from Sieberts Creek on the west, to East Sequim Bay, excluding the town of Sequim.

On June 1, 1948, Clallam County Fire Protection District #3 was formed. Newly elected commissioners were Nick Heuhslein, President; Henry Lotzegesell, vice president; George Spath, board member; and Olga Spath, secretary. Meetings were held monthly at the fire hall or at one of the commissioner's homes. Assessed valuation of the District No. 3 was \$2,000,000 . The commissioners borrowed \$12,000 and issued warrants to purchase a fully equipped fire truck costing \$8,997.72. On March 24, 1949 the district received their first truck.

The truck was stationed at Sequim fire Department and was staffed by the Sequim Volunteer Firefighters. It wasn't until March 1954 that the Fire Commissioners opened the District's first Agnew Fire station Located in R-Corner in the garage of Chad Brown's property. Its first fire engine was a Civil Defense truck on loan from the Port Angeles Fire Department. The R-Corner station began with 10 volunteer firefighters. In 1957 the District annexed the territory from the Jefferson/Clallam County Line west to District 3 and from the Straits of Juan DeFuca to the National Forest boundary.

In 1963 the District entered into an agreement to service Fire District 2 from Morse Creek east to the boundary line of R-Corner. In 1964 the District commissioners purchased land and built the Carlsborg fire station for \$7,500. A third fire station was built in May 1966 in Dungeness, followed by fire stations in Lost Mountain, Diamond Point, and Blyn. In March of 1983, Fire Chief Tom Lowe representing the City of Sequim, the Sequim Fire Department, and Fire District 3 entered into an agreement where District 3 Paramedics would serve the City of Sequim.

The joint arrangement proved so successful that in 1987 voters approved merging the Sequim Fire Department into Fire District 3 to create one entity with Chief Lowe serving as Fire Chief. To develop a new headquarters fire station, property was purchased from the Sequim Grandmothers club off North 5th Street in Sequim and construction of an 11,500 square foot fire station began on November 1987.



The station was completed at a cost of \$700,922 and ready for occupancy in July 1988. This marked the first time there was a career Firefighter/EMT and a Firefighter/Paramedic that respond from a staffed station. Prior to that, career staff responded from their homes. Station staff included Fire Chief Tom Lowe, Assistant Chief Robert Spalinger, Captain Roger Moeder, Firefighter/EMTs William Rogers, Dennis Kettel, and Tony Hudson; Firefighter/Paramedics Michael L' Ami, Doug Sabin, John Wright, and Captain Steve Vogel.



History of Dungeness Station 31

The Dungeness fire station is located in the historic town of Dungeness, which is approximately 4.8 miles from downtown Sequim. This station is staffed by volunteer firefighters who respond to both fire and medical emergencies. Station 31's property was donated by Harry Mapes. The structure is cinder block built in April, 1966, by the Engor Construction Company at a cost of \$7,000.00.



The station houses an engine and an aid car, along with the District's antique engine that is featured in parades and during fire prevention month. A Tsunami siren is active at this station and is audibly tested monthly. This siren is only used as an emergency broadcast notification system in the event of an impending natural or man-made disaster.

History of R-Corner Station 32

The R-Corner Fire Station was organized in 1954 as the Fire District's first station. It was originally housed in the R-Corner Grocery Store garage. The original firefighting vehicle was a loaned Civilian Defense truck.

In 1964 Fire Chief Lorraine Brown and ten volunteer members, Robert Reagan, Philip Miesel, Lorraine Brown, Tom McFarland, Roscoe Miles, Harry Miles, James Percival, Milton Lynch, Harold Miller, and Peter Adolphsen, would staff the 1935 Chevrolet truck loaned by the Port Angeles Fire District.



The station had wide east-west boundaries, extending from Sieberts Creek to East Sequim Bay Road, excluding the town of Sequim and stretched from the strait to Olympic National Park. In 1979 the District bought one acre of land on the south side of US Highway 101 near the old Corner Store. What now serves as the current fire station was built during the summer of 1980.

In the almost 50 intervening years, the R-Corner Station's service area has shrunk while its population has increased. Now the station serves from McDonnell Creek west to the District's border with District 2 near Deer Park Road. Its loaned truck was upgraded to a 1956 Ford pumper, which later was replaced by a new truck in March 1966. The diesel engine in use now was new in 1982. An aid car and emergency medical service equipment have been in use since 1982 when the District added its medical program. Firefighters Ron Becker, Gene Dailey, Bill Rogers, Terry Lewis and Hank Leis became the first EMTs.

History of Carlsborg Station 33

In 1964, land was purchased from Arvie Smith for \$7,500. The Original Carlsborg Fire Station was built in October during that same year. During a mid-July meeting held by the District's Fire Commissioners and a group of Carlsborg home owners, volunteers were organized to staff the new station.

The Sequim Fire Chief, Iris Marshal, offered to train the new crew, which consisted of: Claud Ball, Jack Barnes, Don Brueckner, Paul Brueckner, March Burfett, Roy Chenault, Ernie Schmuck, Arvie Smith, Mark Smith, Gary Smith, Fred Gillispie, Schuler Luce, Milton Lynch, Roy

Lynch, J.O. Neal, Ron Parrish, Ray Reandeau, Bill Sukert, Frank Therrien, Fred Milles, Bill Summerton, Joe Pike, Bob Estep, Bob Hurwarth, Curt Robinson, Walt Sommerville.



In 1965 Carlsborg had installed a bathroom for the sum of \$125. Then in 1970 a small one bay masonry fire station was built. Local contractor O.M. Hendrickson was awarded the contract for the sum of \$7,943 to build this station. Around 1973 Carlsborg became the District's headquarters station until 1987 when it was moved into Sequim. The Carlsborg station has undergone several remodels. The latest was in 2001 when it was converted to accommodate 24/7 staffing with career members. The Carlsborg station is currently staffed with a combination of career Firefighters and volunteer firefighters.

History of Sequim Station 34

Sometime between 1914 and 1923, the City of Sequim acquired a small garage. The City converted this into a one bay fire station located at the corner of Cedar and Seal Street. The station was located at 153 West Cedar and was attached to what also served as the City Hall.

Up until 1987, the Sequim Volunteer Fire Station was also the location for Sequim Police Department and the City jail. And the space also housed the Sequim Police Department's Dispatch Center. To report emergencies, local citizens called 683-4242, which is now the Fire District's business number.

In 1984 the City of Sequim merged with Clallam County Fire District 3. After the consolidation, the Fire District's administrative headquarters was relocated from the Carlsborg station. In 1987 the District built a new station (on property that was previously owned by the Grandmothers Club) and moved its main operations to its current location located at 323 North Fifth Ave. Sequim WA. 98382.



History of Diamond Point Station 35

It's a 14-mile drive, one-way, from Sequim to Diamond Point – and sometimes the amount of traffic can make the drive slow-going. To ease the worry of residents who might face emergencies there, a group of Diamond Point citizens approached Fire District 3 about locating a station in their area. So, in 1970, the District leased land in the Sunshine Acres area from Ed and Helen Dent and built a two bay cinder block fire station at 121 Sunshine Ave.

History of Lost Mountain Fire Station 36

Built in 1980, the fire station located in Texas Valley, is a wood-frame two bay station located at 40 Texas Valley Rd. The original property owner, Mort Whittaker, intended to donate one acre of property for the fire station. But because of county bureaucracy and subdivision land ordinance requirements, he was restrained from doing so.

This resulted in a year of local county commissioner and court hearings. The outcome led to the Fire District having to acquire 10 acres of land off Lost Mountain Rd from Mort Whittaker. The District then, sub-divided it and sold 9 of the 10 acres, retaining one acre for what became the current fire station. A lot of energy and time was required from Fire Chief Fred Barrett and the Fire Commissioners to see this project come to pass. The Fire Station opened up initially with 12 volunteers on June 4th 1980. A surplus military water tender was the first vehicle to occupy the station.



History of Blyn Fire Station 37

The Blyn Fire Station was the last of the District's seven fire stations to be established. The initial station was leased from The Washington State Parks in 1985. The Station was located at the intersection of Louella Rd. and US Highway 101 across from the Sequim Bay State Park. Staffed by volunteer firefighters, it closed in October of 2008 upon expiration of the lease.

























The lapsed lease was replaced by establishing a Partnership with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. This led to the construction of a new Blyn fire station. The Tribe worked the fire district to establish a fire station on Tribal trust lands at the head of Sequim Bay. A lease with no monthly cost to the Fire district was signed for 25 years with additional 25 year same renewable lease at the option of the Fire District.



The Tribe invested \$1million into the building and the Fire District invested \$402,000 to the interior. Upon the project's completion, there was a grand opening celebration of the new Blyn Fire Station in September 2008. The Station is staffed with a combination of both career and volunteer members. It is located at 54 Sophus Rd off US Highway 101, east of Jimmy Come Lately Creek.

Past and Present Fire Commissioners

No Picture Available				
George Spath 1948 – 1954	Nick Heuhslein 1948 – 1975	Henry Lotzgesell 1948 – 1975	Conrad Kirner 1955 – 1977	Lloyd Fisher 1957 – 1974
		No Picture Available		
Rolf Stahlbaum 1974 – 1976	William T. Bean 1975 – 1978	J. Claud Courtier Jr 1976 – 1978	Ernie Schmuck 1978	Janet Little 1978 – 1981
No Picture Available	No Picture Available	No Picture Available		
Jim Percival 1978	Gary Bryant 1978	Hebert Strandskov 1978	J.W. Blaylock 1978 – 1984	Del Caryl 1979 – 1982
No Picture Available	No Picture Available	No Picture Available		
Chuck Little 1981	Dave Cameron 1982 – 1987	Jack Day 1982	Fred Minker 1983	Lawrence Kettel 1985 – 1996, 1998 – 2003
				
Elaine Baker 1988 – 1993	Duane Holter 1994 – 2003	Richard Houts 1997 – 2001, 2004 – 2016	Frank Clatonoff 2000 – 2001	Wes Short 2002 – 2007
				
Dave Cameron 2003	Gary Coffey 2004 – 2014	James Barnfather 2008 – Present	Michael Gawley 2014 – Present	Steve Chinn 2016 – Present

Past and Present Career Members

Fire Chiefs








At a March board meeting in 1974, Rolf Stahlbaum R-Corner volunteer firefighter was appointed to fill Commissioner Lloyd Fisher’s remaining term. In 1976 the fire district felt they needed to hire a fire chief. After reviewing candidates on March 22, 1976, the fire commissioners appointed Rolf Stahlbaum as the District’s first Fire Chief. He then resigned his position as a fire commissioner on March 31, 1976.

Rolf Stahlbaum served as chief until he resigned on August 21, 1978 to take a position as Fire Chief in the Middle East. Rick West became the next fire Chief serving from May 1978 to February 1980. Fred Barrett was Fire Chief from May 1980 to August 1982. Tom Lowe, who at the time was employed as fire chief for the City of Sequim, became the Fire District’s Fire Chief in April 1983.



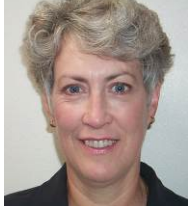




Chief Lowe continued to serve as the Sequim’s Chief until the City merged its fire department with Fire District 3 in 1984. Chief Lowe retired on December 31, 2000. In November 2000 Steve Vogel acted as Interim Fire Chief until the Fire Commissioners appointed Stephen S. Vogel as Fire Chief in February of 2001 until his retirement in 2015. Assistant Chief Ben Andrews was promoted to Fire Chief in 2015.

					
Rolf Stahlbaum 1976 – 1977	Rick West 1978 – 1979	Fred Barrett 1980 – 1983	Tom Lowe 1984 – 2000	Steve Vogel 2001 – 2015	Ben Andrews 2015 to Present








Career Assistant Fire Chiefs

			
Robert Spalinger 1990 – 1999	Roger Moeder 1998 – 2015	Ben Andrews 2003 – 2015	Allen Knobs 2000 – 2009
			
Tony Hudson 1999 – 2001, 2010 to Present	Eric Quitslund 2015 to Present	Dan Orr 2015 to Present	









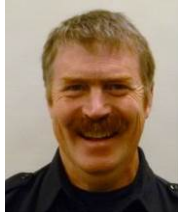
District Secretaries and Administrative Support Staff

Olga Spath 1948 – 1951, 1955 – 1972	George Spath 1951 – 1954	Nola Soderberg 1972 – 3/1978	Chloris Lewis 1978
		No Picture Available	
Marguerite “Peggy” Strandskov, Secretary 1978	Susie Tupper-Spalinger, Secretary 1979 – 1983	Anna Stephenson – Hargrove, Secretary 1983 – 1993	Sandra Shields, Secretary 1993 to 2009
			
Patti Williams, Office Assistant 2002 – to Present	Arlene Obtinario, Admin Assistant 2009 – 2015	Lori Coleman, Admin Assistant 8/14 – to Present	Alwynn Movius, Finance Manager 1/16 – to Present

Captains

			
Bill Rogers 1/84 – 5/95	Dennis Kettel 7/88 – 5/11	Peter Craig 4/92 – 4/09	Derrell Sharp 5/93 – to Present
			
Chris Turner 1/99 to Present	Marc Lawson 6/00 to Present	Bryan Swanberg 6/02 – to Present	

Lieutenants

				
Jeff Upchurch 5/89 – 8/13	Ted Krynski 7/99 – 2/05	Paul Rynearson 5/99 – 11/13	Lawrence Bingham 2/81 – to Present	
				
Chad Cate 7/96 – to Present	Kevin VanDeWege 4/01 – to Present	Joel McKeen 7/06 – to Present	Jeff Albers 7/06 – to Present	Ryan Tillman 10/06 – to Present

Career Paramedics

In 1981 the Fire District gained voter approval for an EMS Levy to staff Paramedics. The proposal to hire paramedics also had strong support from the Sequim Dungeness Hospital Guild who donated \$14,670 to purchase the first Medic car and heart monitor.

Aaron Espy – Hired April 1, 1982, Aaron served as the District’s first paramedic. As such, he served as the District’s lead Paramedic as well as the Medical Captain tasked with implementing the District’s paramedic program. Aaron left the District in April on 1984 to pursue a paramedic position with the Bremerton Fire Department.






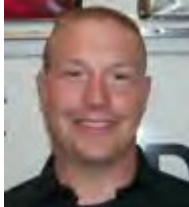



Stephen S. Vogel – Hired as the District’s second full-time paramedic in 1982, Steve served for 25 years as a Paramedic, 28 years as a Senior EMT Instructor. He took over as the District’s Medical Safety Officer in 1984. Steve was promoted to Captain in 1987, Assistant Chief of Emergency Medical Services in 1992, then Fire Chief in 2001.


















Val Grant – Hired April 21st 1982 as a part-time paramedic, Val worked Sundays and took second out calls at night. Prior to this, (9/1981 to 1982) Val was authorized to practice advanced EMT Skills, on a limited basis, until Espy was hired. At that point, she was authorized to practice in full capacity as a paramedic. Technically Val could have been the first Paramedic in the county but because she did not have the combination of equipment and MPD support needed to authorize her to practice her ALS skills, she was not. It was Dr. David Chase, an Olympic Medical Hospital ER physician who certified Val in 1982. Val served a volunteer with the City of Sequim Fire Department and became a part-time employee with the Fire District in 1982 when the Paramedic Program started. Val Grant served the community as a paramedic until 1988. She died on February 9th 1999.











Past Paramedics

Doug Sabin 6/84 – 12/90	Mike L'ami 1984 – 4/89	John Wright 2/86 – 2/02	Michael Stead 5/91 – 12/91
			
Pat Reitz 4/91 – 10/98	Alex Otman 4/92 – 3/99	Mark Schmidt 5/91 – 10/92	Matt Cook 11/01 – 9/06
			
John Harpe 6/96 – 2/10	Brian Oullette 11/11 – 3/16	Matt Schmitz 8/10 – 7/11	James Brown 8/10 – 3/16








Paramedics

				
Matt Newell 11/92 – to Present	Ron Whitney 1/96 – to Present	Len Horst 7/01 – to Present	Stefanie Anderson 10/06 – to Present	Tyler Johnson 3/09 – to Present
				
Kolby Konopaski 3/09 – to Present	Troy Tenneson 5/09 – to Present	Joel Bower 6/09 – to Present	Chris Corbin 8/10 – to Present	John Riley 8/11 – to Present
				
Neil Borggard 8/11 – to Present	Ivan Hueter 1/14 – to Present	Bryce McGinley 10/15 – to Present	Jack Hueter 8/16 – to Present	Erik Payne 8/16 – to Present

Firefighters

			
Larry Parker 7/96 – to Present	Jim Whitaker 7/01 – to Present	Scott Dickson 7/01 – to Present	Steve Anders 10/01 – to Present
			
Kjel Skov 6/05 – to Present	Jared Romberg 8/08 – to Present	Travis Anderson 8/08 – to Present	Lee Forderer 6/09 – to Present

Specialty & Support Staff

			
Tharin Huisman, Maintenance Supervisor 8/96 – to Present	John McIntyre, Fleet Mechanic 1/01 – to Present	Grant Levein, Grounds Maintenance 5/06 – 7/11	
			
Patrick Young, Fire Code Technician 10/10 – 9/14	Kevin Smith, Fleet Mechanic 11/11 – to Present	Steve Jackson, Fire Code Technician 2/15 – to Present	John Brygider, Facility Technician 9/15 – to Present