



Clallam County Fire District 3

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PRESS RELEASE 7/30/2024

Clallam County Fire District 3 Announces Mark Karjalainen as Community Paramedic to Enhance 9-1-1 Services

Clallam County Fire District 3 (District) is proud to announce the appointment of Mark Karjalainen, a firefighter paramedic, as its first community paramedic. This new role was created to improve responses to frequent 9-1-1 callers and manage non-emergent calls more effectively. The decision follows a memorandum of understanding with firefighters' union IAFF Local 2933, agreed upon by the fire commissioners on July 9, 2024. Mark Karjalainen will serve in this critical position for a minimum of two years, working a 40-hour work week.



Fire Chief Justin Grider highlighted the importance of the new position, stating, "We definitely have a need for someone to help take the load off the 9-1-1 system, especially when it's something that could be handled by a single medic". The community paramedic role is designed to assist with recurring issues, such as falls or medication management, by connecting patients with local resources and services. This proactive approach aims to prevent situations from escalating into emergencies, thereby optimizing emergency response times and educating the community.

Mark Karjalainen's appointment demonstrates a significant advancement in the District's commitment to enhancing public health and safety. The District will closely monitor the program to adapt and respond to the community's evolving needs. "We're positioning ourselves to adapt to changes in what this role can be. Mark is the right choice because he is open to expanding the position, and we are excited about the services he will bring," stated Chief Grider. "He is a charismatic leader, an excellent paramedic, and a wonderful partner to our community. We are fortunate to have him serving us."

FF/Paramedic Karjalainen will start in his new role the week of September 1, 2024. Clallam County Fire District 3 operates with a dedicated team of career and volunteer firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs, including the new community paramedic position. The District is committed to promoting public safety and enhancing emergency response capabilities in Sequim and the surrounding areas.

For more information, please visit ccfd3.org.

Clallam County Fire District 3 provides Emergency Medical Services, Fire Suppression and all Hazard mitigation from three fire stations staffed 24/7/365 with Firefighters, EMT's and Paramedics and three fire stations that are served by our Volunteer members year round to the communities of Gardiner, Diamond Point, Blyn, Jamestown Tribe, Happy Valley, Sequim, Dungeness, Texas Valley, Carlsborg, Agnew, Little Oklahoma, O'Brien Road communities, R Corner, and all points in between, North and South.

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