

The Bugle Report

By Chief Sinclair



Once again, there is a war ...half a world away. With Russia invading Ukraine, we are, in the minds of many, heading into World War 3. Some have even said; we are already there. Other than the horror seen on the news with children being killed and brave Ukrainian military defying the Russian war machine, we have been untouched locally. Right?

Well, maybe not. At least maybe not yet. There is a concept called the 5th Battlespace and that is Cyber Warfare. The ability to prevent and interdict things like ransomware and denial of service attacks is a growing concern throughout the world. For the last couple of weeks, our fantastic Information Technology personnel at the City of Ellensburg have been buttressing our defenses and educating us on the new phishing and threat vectors. This morning we had a Virtual Private Network (VPN) threat come in from Japan on a firefighter's credentials. It was stopped by IT because had tightened up our defenses.

The financial sector, energy sector, healthcare, local government, and transportation are all being continuously attacked. As we ratchet up the sanctions on Russia, we will see the state of Russia and their proxy's attacking NATO and specifically the United States of America. Based on what Putin has stated, today the Department of Homeland Security put out reminder information regarding what to do in the setting of a nuclear attack. As one of the children of the 50's and 60's doing drills on hiding under your desk, the recent education document made chills run up my spine. I had truly hoped that the Cold War was in the past. The concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) kept the world safe for 75 years.

The other issue that will affect us is fuel prices and general energy costs if the war continues. The price of regular gas is above \$4.00 per gallon and could potentially go to \$7.00 soon. This is according to experts in the energy sector.

We cannot impact the war in Eastern Europe, and we don't set US foreign policy. However, there are some common sense things that we can do. Have cash (in small and medium sized bills) at home. How much depends on you, your risk tolerance, and your spending. You will want to be able to buy things if our banks are disrupted for a period of time. Keep your fuel tanks filled. I wouldn't let your private vehicles get below a quarter tank if you can avoid it.

Here is the big one. Make sure you keep your home computers, up-to-date with the newest protections, make sure you know who send you emails and don't open or click on anything you don't have too. Keep your net surfing for you and your family down. Malware is now everywhere, and many nation-states and other criminal bad actors are attacking systems and releasing malware.

One other issue to be aware of, don't believe everything you see and/or hear. If you see it on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram or any other social media or the news, frankly, don't take it as the gospel. A propaganda war is also being fought.

There is a technology called "Deep Fake" that will allow a bad actor to have President Biden, as an example, say whatever they want him to say. They also have bots that are stirring up fake opinions and news with planted stories. Russia did a false flag operation claiming Ukraine had committed genocide.

We are isolated but not immune to these issues here. These are turbulent times for us as a community, state, nation, and world. We will survive this. But being prepared for bad things is always a good idea.

On to some other news within the District. We have retirements to report. Ed Dittonholer turned in his gear and has retired from the volunteer service. Ed says it is time to head for other pursuits. Doug Webster is also retiring, although he is young (anyone younger than me is young). Jerry Pettit and Pat Clerf have also turned in their gear and have retired. Each of these awesome firefighters has served the community for 30 plus years. We honor their service and appreciate their commitment to the citizens of the Kittitas Valley. That means we need everyone to be on the lookout for talented and community-minded people that we can entice into becoming a volunteer. If you have the name of someone, please let me know. We will then get information to them and see if we can build our volunteer numbers again.

Our newest member of the District is Probationary FF/Paramedic Tim Rowatt. He starts on March 2, 2022 and will be assigned directly to shift. Tim has been a paramedic for 6 years, serving in Lewis County and for the last 3 years in Nevada working for a critical access hospital as a paramedic and as a volunteer firefighter. He is enrolled in the second class of the year at the Washington State Fire Academy. Please welcome Tim when you see him. On March 11, we will hold another testing process and I look forward to giving you great news in the next newsletter. We have some candidates that are established firefighters that want to work here.

On the COVID front, we should be relaxing the masking rules for vaccinated personnel on March 12, consistent with the revised information from the Governor's office. Non-vaccinated people will need to remain in masks until the statewide emergency is lifted and/or the Governor amends his vaccine requirement.

There was a recent (November 2021) court ruling in Port of Tacoma vs. Sacks that has us rethinking our out-of-district and especially out-of-state training. Under this decision, they applied the Washington State Minimum Wage Act and we will be required to pay people for their travel time. For out-of-state conferences or even heading back to the National Fire Academy we will have to pay for hours outside of their normal work periods. Our employees cannot bargain this right away. So, we are working with training to bring in additional classes internal to the organization.

The rain of the last couple of days has helped, but in the next few weeks, we will have the spring burn season throughout the valley. The grass is dry and burns well. We will have a few fires that get wind-aligned and take off. Remember that a frontal attack can be risky, so be careful. Look at the fuels, topography, and wind...then decide. I would encourage everyone to get your wildland gear ready.

Speaking of wildland, congratulations goes out to Spencer Slyfield for being promoted by DNR to our local FMO. Spencer has done an awesome job with DNR is a true North Star for the agency.

Please keep the people on the frontlines, that are keeping us safe in your thoughts and prayers. I am sure I will see each of you sometime soon.

Stay safe,

John

DEPUTY CHIEF'S MESSAGE

By Deputy Chief Elliott



OPERATIONS

- Our spring melt seems to have spared us any serious flooding. It looks like the early fire season could start anytime. Remember, these are generally fast-moving fires, wind driven but generally in light fuels. Getting ahead with a wet line can be a safe and effective tactic.
- DNR's plan to staff a hand crew may actually occur over the next couple of years. In the meantime, the engines appear to be staffed with experienced engine bosses. Parts of a hand crew, will likely respond as add on resources to the engines, which will be a net gain over last year.
- Lt Perry will return to B-Shift as a FF/PM 4/1 and we will fill the vacant position in training shortly.
- The Reserve Program was discontinued after many years of efforts to both find a role that fit the community's needs and, most importantly, to adequately staff the program. This was not a matter of lack of effort on the reserve personnel. We are left with some community needs – EMS standby – that will likely need attention. Certified and non-certified personnel may assist on as available basis. We are also reducing the number and frequency of events we will provide these services. The standbys will need at least 1 certified EMS provider but the second can be a certified advanced first aid provider.

EMS

- COVID update: It is likely that we will be soon relaxing masking requirements as the state lowers their requirements. Please remember to take preventative measures if you have symptoms. We will keep testing supplies available for KVFR personnel.
- We have a couple of paramedics working on their county probation, which means they should be completed by summer.
- We continue to see a relatively large number of behavioral and mental health patients – please be cautious as these incidents can be unpredictable but also maintain your sense of customer service and compassion. The problem will likely worsen before we can catch up with services to divert these people away from the 911 system.

Training / Prevention:

- We are offering ICS 400 on 3/16 and 3/17 – see Training ,if you are interested.
- The pace of development continues to increase. Our prevention personnel are working hard to insure that everything is built to standard.
 1. The Nights Inn will likely become a Hopesource housing facility.
 2. The Train Depot will likely be occupied as a transportation hub shortly.
 3. Upwards of 500 housing units will likely be built in the next twelve months with many more on the way.
 4. A very large cold storage facility and a refurb of Nicholson Pavilion are also on the way.

TRAINING AND SAFETY NOTES:

March

If you are NOT red carded (Wildland FFTII (Basic red card) but would like to be: We have the self-paced on-line version that is recognized by the NWCG. You can go to Target solutions, under file center and click “wildland fire-fighting initial red card training” in this file it will have the instructions and links to get to the online training. You will need to complete L-180, S-130, S-190, complete a pack test and participate in your initial wildland field day. We will notify everyone, once we have a date for the initial field day training.

Wildland Refresher: All personnel that have previously been Red Card qualified, you must complete an annual refresher to be current in 2022 and have a Red Card issued.

The course dates will be:

Monday, March 14th 1800-2100 St. 29 (ST 26,27, 28)

Tuesday, March 22nd 1800-2100 St. 29 (ST 22, 23, 24)

If you are unable to attend either of the either of the two refresher classes, a daytime refresher is available **March, 15th 0930-1200 at St. 29.**

March Drills:

- ◆ 1st Drill: Rig Checks and wildland shelter video & deployment

START TIME: 1800 @ your volunteer station

Fairview– February 28th @1800

Westside– March 1st @1800

Badger Pocket/ Denmark– March 7th @1800

Broadview– March 8th @1800

- ◆ 2nd Drill: Red Card Refresher

START TIME: 1800 @ St. 29

All Red Card holders must attend one of the sessions. Refer to scheduled nights above ↑.

- ◆ OTEP: KVFR Module 8, March 21th, 1900 @ Station 29

* *NEXT COMMISSIONER MEETING* *
* *Thursday, March 10, 2021* *
* *1000 Hours* *
* *400 E Mountain View* *



Annual Banquet Update:

Unfortunately, we have gone two consecutive years without a KVFR Appreciation and Awards Banquet. With the COVID protocols beginning to relax, we want to recognize our members and share in celebrating your service to the community. We have decided to schedule a “mini” banquet at each volunteer company's station as your second drill in April. Each shift (A,B,C) will have the same “mini” banquet event scheduled in April. While this will not be the event we are used to, we still want to bring some traditions like the much-loved slideshow. We appreciate the hard work and dedication you contribute to this organization and community.





2020/2021 KVFR Modified Award Ceremony

Where: Your Volunteer Station

When: Station 26-Fairview: April 18th, 2022 @ 6pm

Station 28/27-Westside/Reecer Creek : April 19th, 2022 @ 6pm

Station 24/23-Badger Pocket/Denmark: April 25th, 2022 @ 6pm

Station 22-Broadview : April 26th, 2022 @ 6pm

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are unable to allow any guests to attend the award ceremony. Please only bring yourself. Dinner and refreshments will be provided along with the traditional KVFR slideshow!

Please RSVP to Sydney McBride: 509.933.7231 or mcbridesy@kvfr.org or through TargetSolutions