



# S.E. THURSTON FIRE AUTHORITY

SUMMER 2025

## A Message from Fire Chief Mark King



Thank you for taking a moment to read our newsletter. It's been some time since we've shared an update like this, and we've kept it short—less than two pages—to respect your time. Inside, you'll find both encouraging news and a few important challenges we're working to address.

First, the good news: S.E. Thurston Fire Authority continues to operate under a balanced budget and has passed every independent financial and accountability audit conducted by the state. This integrity and accountability is important—we understand that we're entrusted with public funds, and we take that responsibility seriously.

We've also updated our Capital Facilities Plan to identify the emergency equipment, vehicles, and station improvements needed to support our growing service area. While these items may not get as much attention as the firefighters who use them, they are essential to delivering safe, effective emergency response.

A critical component of this effort is upgrading our fleet. Many of our apparatus are aging, have high mileage, and experience heavy daily use—leading to rising maintenance costs and increasing risk of failure. SETFA is working to replace and upgrade vehicles to keep our fleet operational and maintain the fast response times our community depends on. The Plan also shows that three of our stations require improvements to improve coverage and reduce response times. Our current operating budget cannot support these major capital needs, which may lead to a bond request in the coming year.

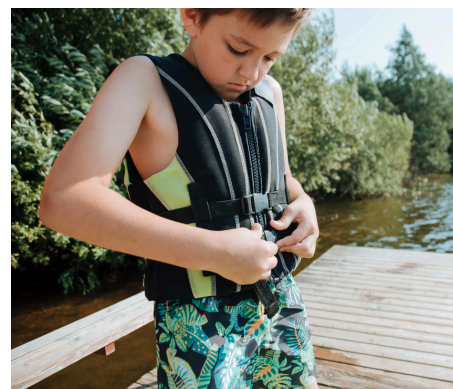
Another area of concern is the increasing risk of wildland fires. The communities we serve—both urban and rural—are interconnected and vulnerable to these events. In just the past five years, SETFA has responded to 170 wildland fires. This trend is rising, and we've included information in this newsletter to help you reduce your own risk.

As always, I welcome your questions, ideas, or concerns. Please feel free to contact me at 360-458-2799 or [chief1@setfa.com](mailto:chief1@setfa.com).

## Make a Splash the Smart Way

Whether you're boating, swimming, or just dipping your toes in, we want you to have fun and stay safe! Here are a few water-wise tips to remember:

- Wear a lifejacket. Yes, even if you are a strong swimmer! Lifejackets save lives whether you're on a boat or in the water.
- Never swim solo. Never swim solo. Bring a buddy — it's safer and way more fun.
- Watch for hazards. Stay clear of currents, deep drop-offs, and hidden obstacles.
- Be wary of cold water. Lakes and rivers can be icy cold, even in summer. Cold shock or hypothermia can sneak up fast.
- Designate a water watcher. Drowning is quick and silent. Always have someone keeping an eye on swimmers.



Let's make every water adventure a safe one!



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## Wildfire Readiness Starts at Home

As summer approaches, S.E. Thurston Fire Authority is asking residents to help reduce wildfire risk by being diligent with fire safety—both around the home and while enjoying the outdoors.

Barbecues, campfires, and fireworks are staples of the season, but all carry the potential to spark wildfires if not handled responsibly. Grills should be kept well away from homes and overhanging branches, and never left unattended. After use, coals and ashes must be fully extinguished before disposal. And while fireworks may be part of local traditions, the safest option is to attend public displays rather than lighting your own, especially during dry conditions.

In addition to practicing safe summer habits, homeowners play a critical role in protecting their property by creating defensible space. This means removing dry leaves, pine needles, and other debris from gutters, roofs, decks, and around the base of your home. Trim trees and shrubs, especially near structures, and store firewood or propane tanks at least 30 feet away. If you're landscaping this year, consider fire-resistant plants and materials to further reduce the chance of a fire spreading to your home.

Need help getting started? Residents can request a free home consultation to assess their wildfire readiness at [wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov](http://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov).

Finally, we encourage everyone to sign up for local emergency alerts through Thurston County Emergency Management. A little preparation now can go a long way in protecting your home and community.

