



RENTON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION



# PROPOSITION 1

Continuing the Fire Benefit Charge | Vote November 2

We're fortunate to live in a country where we can vote! The Renton RFA has placed Proposition 1 on the November 2nd election ballot, asking voters to decide on the continuation of the Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) for an additional 10 years.

*FBC funds over 40% of our fire and life safety services and response capabilities.*

Providing our community with reliable fire and life safety services is our highest priority. The FBC currently makes up over 40% of our annual revenue and is necessary to maintain the current level of service and response capabilities that the Renton community has become accustomed to.

The FBC provides critical funding for resources such as:

- Firefighter staffing

- Safety equipment
- Fire engines, aid units, and specialty vehicles
- Fire stations

It also funds community programs such as Public Education, Fire Investigation, and FDCARES, which helps vulnerable members of the community seek assistance for their health and safety while relieving the 9-1-1 system of nonemergency calls.

**THE FBC IS NOT A NEW FEE**

The FBC is not a new tax or fee. It has been in place since 2016, when it was first approved by voters. State law requires that voters reauthorize the FBC six years after its initial approval, which is why it is on the ballot this November. A simple majority vote is needed for reauthorization.

**THE FBC IS STABLE AND RELIABLE**

The FBC is one of Renton RFA's two primary

funding sources. The other is property tax (fire levy). Unlike property tax, which can fluctuate based on changes in the economy, the FBC is a consistent and reliable source of funding.

Using a standardized formula, FBC costs are distributed to property owners based on the fire protection resources they would need to protect their specific property. The formula takes into consideration the use, risks, and hazards of all the structures on the property to determine an amount. Properties that require more fire protection resources pay more under the FBC. Properties requiring fewer fire protection resources pay less.

Commercial, industrial, and multi-family properties typically pay more under the FBC, and residential properties pay less.

Together, these two funding sources—the FBC and the fire levy—provide a stable and sustainable source of revenue for Renton RFA.

## IN THIS ISSUE

PROPOSITION 1: Continuing the Fire Benefit Charge ..... Pg. 1

Congressman Adam Smith Learns About FDCARES ..... Pg. 2

Celebrating Charlie..... Pg. 3

Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety..... Pg. 3

Remembering Don Persson..... Pg. 4

Meet Our Newest Recruits..... Pg. 4

Join Us for an Open House Event..... Pg. 4





**PROPOSITION 1: Continuing the Fire Benefit Charge *(continued)***

Having an FBC also means our maximum fire levy tax rate is ***one-third lower*** than it could be otherwise.

**DISCOUNTS/EXEMPTIONS APPLY**

Discounts and exemptions apply to the FBC. Low-income seniors and disabled persons who qualify for a discount or exemption on their property tax may also receive a discount or exemption on their FBC.

Those with certain monitored fire protection systems, such as a monitored fire alarm and/or fire sprinkler system may also be eligible for a discount.

*The FBC is necessary to maintain current service levels and response capabilities.*

**If Proposition 1 is approved, service levels and response capabilities will continue to meet community needs.** We will be able to continue providing a level of staffing necessary to meet the demands of our growing community; new and well-maintained vehicles, equipment, and stations necessary for effective emergency services; and public programs that help assist community members in need.

**If the measure is rejected, Renton RFA will have to consider ways to address the more than 40% gap in our revenue that will result.** Options for addressing the gap that will be considered may include:

- Increasing the property tax.
- Reducing or eliminating programs such as Public Education, Fire Investigation, or FDCARES.
- Reducing service levels by lowering staffing numbers or providing fewer response units per station.

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

Elections matter. Make your voice heard about the future of fire and life safety for the Renton community—please vote in the November 2 election.



For more information, visit:  
[www.rentonrfa.org/proposition1](http://www.rentonrfa.org/proposition1)

Have questions? Submit an inquiry online:  
[www.rentonrfa.org/fbc-email](http://www.rentonrfa.org/fbc-email)

Or give our team a call:  
**425-276-9500**



**CONGRESSMAN ADAM SMITH LEARNS ABOUT FDCARES**

Any time a public official or representative of our community seeks to learn more about a program or service provided by our regional fire authority, we jump at the opportunity to provide more insight.

We were recently delighted by the opportunity to meet with Washington State Congressman Adam Smith to provide him with an informative overview of the FDCARES program. Congressman Smith asked many great questions during the overview, and we'd like to share some of the information he received with you too!

FDCARES is a specialized program designed to address low-acuity calls for service. You might be asking yourself, "What is a low-acuity call?" Many people ask that same question. Generally speaking, low-acuity calls are those that require assistance, but are not emergent or life-threatening in nature—for example, when a person slips and falls and needs assistance getting up. Their need for help is very evident, but if there are no life-threatening injuries, their need for help is not emergent.

Before the FDCARES program was launched, our firefighters would respond to low-acuity calls in an engine or an aid unit, address the immediate need of the patient and/or

transport them to a nearby hospital, and go back on call. However, when we looked into the data behind these low-acuity calls, we identified opportunities for service improvement. Utilizing a fire engine or an aid unit on these calls was costly and lacked certain equipment that is most helpful for low-acuity patients. We also identified that it did very little to resolve the root cause of the patient's issue, which resulted in high utilization of the 9-1-1 system by the patient in the future for repeat, low-acuity incidents.

To address this, we launched the FDCARES program, in partnership with Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. FDCARES has a specialized vehicle designed with equipment to specifically help common concerns of low-acuity patients. The program is staffed by a nurse and a firefighter/EMT to provide a deeper level of one-on-one care and address the root cause of the patient's incidents. In addition, the FDCARES team is connected to local social workers who they can connect to the patient to ensure they continue to receive the help they need to remain as safe and independent as possible.

We appreciate Congressman Smith's interest in this proactive program. If you'd like to learn more, visit us online: [www.rentonrfa.org](http://www.rentonrfa.org).





# CELEBRATING CHARLIE

Earlier this year, the Welling family was rocked by a medical emergency no one could have predicted. Their daughter, Charlie, went into sudden cardiac arrest at 11 years old.

Thanks to the quick response of her family, 9-1-1 was called and Renton RFA responded. Charlie had been unresponsive, with no detectable sign of a pulse or breathing for several minutes. Our Station 15 crew sprang into action and was able to revive Charlie and transport her to a nearby hospital for emergency treatment, where her fighting spirit shined brightest as she made a miraculous recovery.

A little over eight months later, we had the absolute joy of celebrating Charlie's 12th birthday with her at Station 15. We are so incredibly proud of how strong she has been through such an ordeal and were honored to share her special day with her. This is a perfect example of why we do what we do. Thank you, Charlie, for inspiring and motivating us.



# LEARN THE SOUNDS OF FIRE SAFETY

October marks the beginning of Fire Prevention Month. This year's campaign aims to educate community members about the different sounds made by smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The message may be simple, but it is so important. Renton Regional Fire Authority encourages all community members to embrace this 2021 Fire Prevention Week theme.

Is there a beep or chirp coming out of your smoke or carbon monoxide alarm? What does it mean? Learning the difference between the sound of a low battery and that of a smoke or CO alarm is so crucial to keeping you, and those around you, safe.

When an alarm makes noise—a beeping sound or a chirping sound—you must take action. Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the alarms and knows how to respond. To learn the sounds of your specific smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, check the manufacturer's instructions provided in the box, or search for the brand and model online.

## SMOKE ALARMS

Smoke alarms can detect smoke and fire by sensing small particles in the air using different kinds of technology. Once particles have been detected above a certain threshold, they signal the alarm to sound. A continued sound of three loud beeps indicates that smoke or fire is present. A single chirp every 30 seconds indicates a low battery. If the chirping continues after you change the battery, it most likely indicates the smoke alarm needs to be replaced.

Every home should have smoke alarms on every level, outside all sleeping areas, and in all bedrooms. A smoke alarm only works when it is properly installed and maintained. Depending on how your smoke alarm is

powered (9-volt battery, 10-year lithium, or hardwired), you'll have to maintain it according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Smoke alarm powered by a 9-volt battery:

- Test the alarm monthly.
- Replace the batteries at least once per year.
- The entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.

### Smoke alarm powered by a 10-year lithium (or "long-life") battery:

- Test the alarm monthly.
- Since you cannot (and should not) replace the lithium battery, the entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Smoke alarm that is hardwired into the home's electrical system:

- Test the alarm monthly.
- The backup battery should be replaced at least once per year.
- The entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.

There are also smoke alarms and other devices to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These include pillow or bed shakers and strobe lights that activate when the smoke alarm sounds.

## CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that is often referenced as the silent killer. The only way to detect the presence of carbon monoxide is with a CO detector. Check the batteries in your detector and check its age. If the detector is more than 7 years old, consider replacing it based on the manufacturer's recommendations.

CO is the result of incomplete combustion

and may come from a variety of sources, including fireplaces, stoves, or furnaces. Have your furnace serviced annually to ensure that it is burning clean and that exhaust is properly vented. If you burn wood in a stove or fireplace, leave the flue open until all the ashes are cold. If not properly vented, warm embers can produce enough CO to create dangerous conditions.

Cars idling in or near the garage have been known to cause toxic CO levels in homes. Always open the garage door fully before starting a vehicle.

Learning the difference between your CO detector's alarm signal, low battery signal (usually a periodic chirp), and end-of-life alert is crucial. Make sure you always replace low batteries immediately.

Carbon monoxide poisoning often comes with flu-like symptoms, such as headache, nausea, or dizziness. If you suddenly experience these symptoms or if multiple people in your home exhibit these symptoms, get out of your home and call 9-1-1 right away.



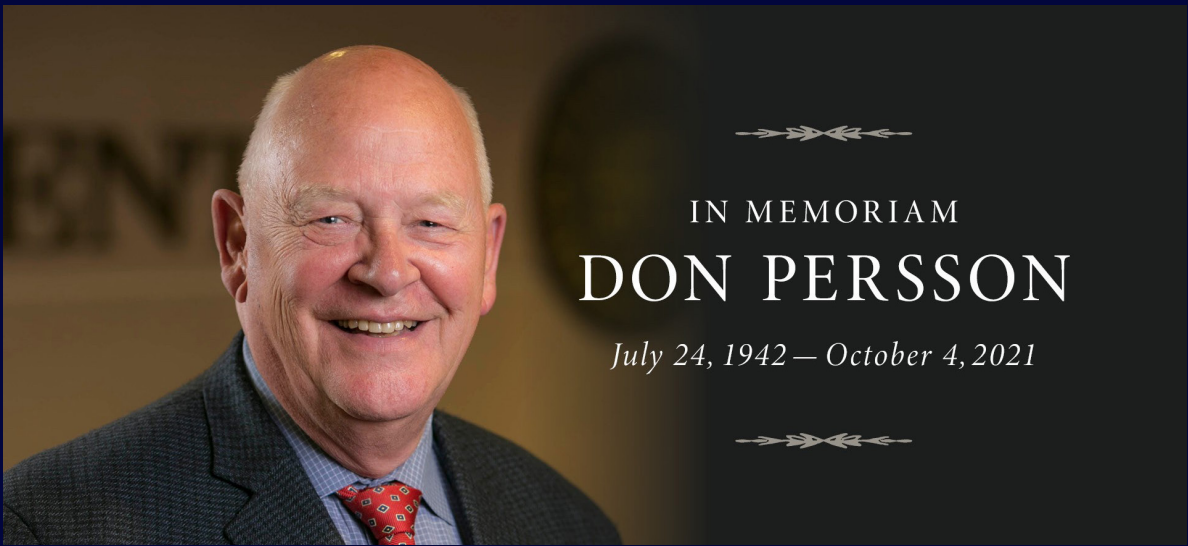
**CHANGE YOUR CLOCK**  
**CHANGE YOUR**  
**BATTERY**  
**SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES**

## "FALL BACK" TO STANDARD TIME—NOVEMBER 7

Set your clock back one hour and check your smoke alarms! The first Sunday of November marks the official change from daylight saving time. While turning time back one hour, fire departments across the nation ask every household to check on the condition of their smoke detectors.

Remember, many smoke alarms are now equipped with long-life lithium batteries intended to last the alarm's lifespan—about 10 years. No matter what kind of battery you have, they need to be tested every month. Know your alarm! Know your battery!





## REMEMBERING DON PERSSON

On October 4, 2021, the Renton community suffered a great loss with the passing of Don Persson.

Don was a beloved member of the Renton RFA family, serving on our Governance Board from 2016 to 2019. He was also a member of the Renton City Council for 20 years, and before that a member of the Renton Police Department for 33 years.

Don's unwavering support for the health and safety of the Renton community was made evident by his life-long service to everyone in it. His support of the community impacted countless lives, and the deep level of knowledge and experience he imparted on our agency during his time as a board member made us a better organization.

Aside from his many professional accolades and his inspiring dedication to public service, what people will remember most about Don

was his incredible heart. Those lucky enough to have spent time with him understand what we mean when we say he could bring a smile and a laugh to any room. Don was a community leader and a mentor, but most importantly, he was a friend to all.

This month, the Renton RFA Governance Board unanimously signed a proclamation declaring October 11, 2021, to be Don Persson Day in honor of his many contributions to the Renton community.

While this loss is difficult to process, the legacy that Don has left behind is undeniable, and through this proclamation, we will never forget. So many lives have been positively impacted by his wisdom, his humor, and his kindness.

Our deepest condolences go out to the Persson family.



## Join our OPEN HOUSE EVENTS

**October 30, 2021**

<b>Fire Station 16</b> 12923 156th Ave SE 9 AM — 11 AM	<b>Fire Station 17</b> 14810 SE Petrovitsky Rd 1 PM — 3 PM
--	--

There will be fun activities and fire safety education for the whole family. Plus, meet our firefighters! All community members are welcome.

## RENTON RFA GOVERNANCE BOARD

**RUTH PÉREZ**  
Board Chair

**MARCUS MORRELL**  
Vice Chair

**KERRY ABERCROMBIE**  
Board Member

**RANDY CORMAN**  
Board Member

**RYAN MCIRVIN**  
Board Member

**MYRON MEIKLE**  
Board Member

**LINDA SARTNURAK**  
Board Member (non-voting)

## RENTON RFA LEADERSHIP TEAM

**STEVE HEITMAN**  
Fire Chief

**WILL AHO**  
Deputy Chief of Response Operations

**CHARLES DESMITH**  
Deputy Chief of Emergency Medical Services

**MARK SEAVER**  
Deputy Chief of Support Services

**ANJELA BARTON**  
Fire Marshal

**SAMANTHA BABICH**  
Chief Administration Officer

## MEET OUR NEWEST RECRUITS

Below are the newest recruits to the Renton RFA team. These individuals have not yet joined our ranks, but are currently in fire academy through the South King County Fire Training Consortium (SKCFTC). SKCFTC is a collaborative organization, comprised of agencies throughout the county, designed to

administer standardized firefighter and EMT training to help ensure best practices and universal procedures. The academy lasts 21 weeks, and once completed, the individuals below will officially be apprentice firefighters, ready to serve the Renton community!



David Cox



Kristian Ramos



Shawna Mailloux



Tommy Horning

