

In an effort to consistently look at ways to improve its service level, Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue (SPFR) is currently undergoing a long term process with Eastside Fire and Rescue (EF&R) to evaluate the possibility of joining the Eastside Fire and Rescue Partnership.

Already for the last several years SPFR has been working closely together with EF&R in a number of ways. Presently, EF&R performs all the maintenance and repair of equipment for all fire service vehicles. Additionally, EF&R provides mutual aid in many areas such as operations, public education, and chaplain services.

Joining the partnership would allow SPFR the ability to have a regional voice for emergency medical services, while protecting the virtue of local control by maintaining a Board position within EF&R. Such a board position may be selected from the existing SPFR three person board of commissioners, which would still be elected by the citizens of Snoqualmie Pass. Additionally the local board would continue to meet monthly.

Partnering with EF&R may greatly improve efficiency in all aspects of how SPFR does business. SPFR may benefit by the partnership through significant financial savings that may occur through consolidated operations. One of the biggest savings may be in the area of insurance stated SPFR Fire Chief Matt Cowan.

EF&R Chief Lee Soptich is very much interested in exploring how the two agencies could compliment each others operations and continue to build on several successful ventures to date. Following a very preliminary study of finance and operations, he already believes that combining budgets could free up dollars to possibly add a company officer at the Pass on a full time basis, which would be available to serve the Pass and assist in the North Bend/District 38 area if needed. The same officer could also be used to manage a specific program for the entire region, something that would benefit a couple hundred square miles.

The backbone of Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue is its volunteer Fire Fighters. This is something that there would not be any intent to change any time in the near future according to both SPFR Chief Cowan and EF&R Chief Soptich.

Currently the Eastside Fire and Rescue Partnership consists of five different fire departments. These departments include the Cities of Issaquah, North Bend, and Sammamish as well as the King County Fire Districts #10 (Surrounding Issaquah) and #38 (surrounding North Bend). In addition to Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue there are at least two other fire departments evaluating the possibility of joining Eastside Fire and Rescue.

While still in the early stages of consideration, once a plan for the potential

partnership has been drafted, the Board of Commissioners for both EF&R and SPFR will review the plan and seek community input before the partnership is finalized. Additional information regarding EF&R can be found on their web site at [www.eastsidefire-rescue.org](http://www.eastsidefire-rescue.org).