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THE FIRST RESPONDER

A South King Fire Publication

Serving the residents of Greater Federal Way and Des Moines

SPRING 2026

MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW FIRE CHIEF



I am honored to serve as Fire Chief of South King Fire following my appointment by the Board of Commissioners on January 5, 2026. For me, this role represents a meaningful homecoming. I grew up in Federal Way, attending Lake Dolloff Elementary, Kilo, and Thomas Jefferson High School, and today my wife and three daughters and I are proud to continue calling this area home.

It is a privilege to join an organization with a strong tradition of excellence in serving the residents and visitors of our communities. Our team of approximately 212 dedicated individuals embraces a people-centered approach where respect, compassion, and professionalism guide how we serve one another and our community. As we move into 2026, we do so with a strong foundation and clear priorities for the future.

Upcoming strategic highlights include:

- We are conducting a Standard of Cover (SOC) and Master Plan (MP) to ensure fiscal responsibility and grow operational capacity into the future. The SOC will analyze the current capacity and distribution of firefighters and emergency response vehicles (such as ladder trucks, engines, aid cars, rescue apparatus, and command vehicles) relative to anticipated community growth, expectations, and risk factors. The MP will provide a comprehensive roadmap for improving emergency response, including evaluating future fire station locations and the efficient distribution of firefighters throughout the fire district.

- Planning for the renovation of Fire Station 62 will begin in March 2026, with construction anticipated to start in 2027. Once complete, the station will meet current standards for carcinogen reduction to enhance firefighter health and safety, and seismic retrofits will ensure continued operations in a natural disaster. Capacity for firefighters and response vehicles will expand to offset the increase in calls for service. During construction, firefighters will be relocated to other fire stations within the district to minimize impacts on emergency response.

- The administrative team will relocate to a renovated fire administration building, adjacent to Federal Way City Hall in late summer or early fall of 2026. This move coincides with the transition out of Fire Station 62 to support the station's expanded emergency response capacity. The new building will consolidate information technology, finance, human resources, fire prevention, mobile integrated health, EMS, and operations to improve functional efficiency.

We look forward to a productive year ahead. Thank you for your continued support of South King Fire and the work of our team.

Ryan Woodey,
Fire Chief



Chief Ryan Woodey shares a proud moment with his family.



All smiles for Commissioners Monroe, Fuller and Vadino with Fire Chief Woodey, Assistant Chief Michaels and Assistant Chief Suckoll.

Did You Know?
South King Fire regularly seeks grants and alternative funding sources to support initiatives aimed at enhancing employee health and community services. In 2024, our team submitted a federal funding proposal through Adam Smith's office to obtain decontamination systems for cleaning firefighter bunker gear and equipment.

This month, we received notice that our request for $850,000 was approved as part of the FY26 Community Project Funding program. This spring, we will collaborate with our federal partners to ensure we make the most of this support.

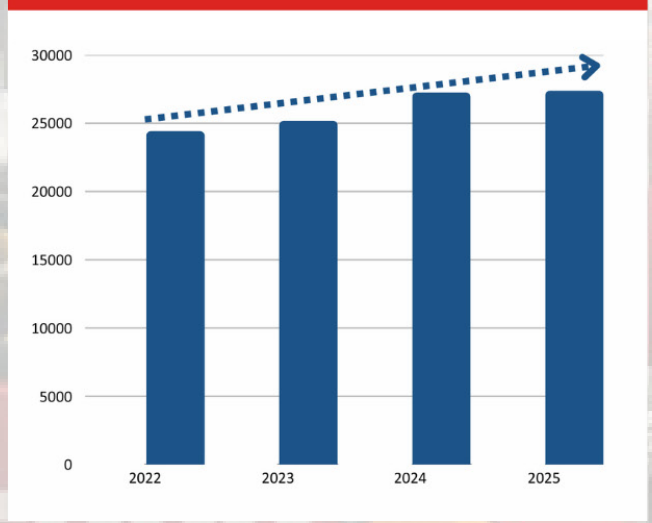
2	*EMERGENCY RESPONSE: 2025 BY THE NUMBERS/SOUTH KING FIRE IN THE COMMUNITY*
3	*EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING OUR TEAM, BOOSTING OUR IMPACT/SPRING INTO SAFETY*
4	*FROM ACADEMY TO ACTION: MEET OUR NEWEST FIREFIGHTERS*

EMERGENCY RESPONSE: 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

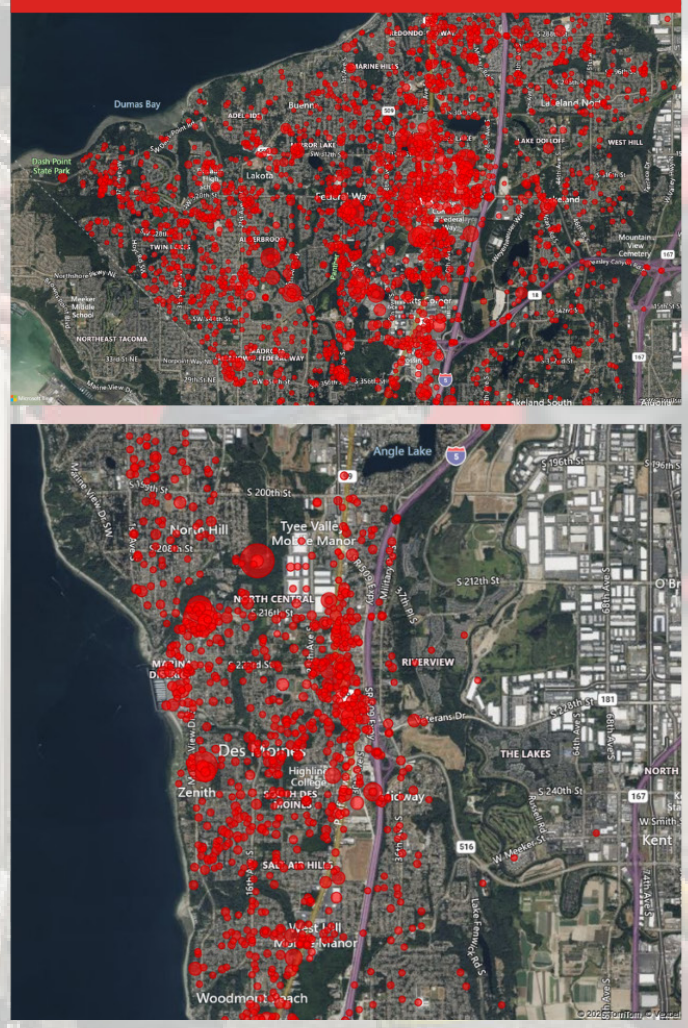
27,382 INCIDENTS

31,875 UNITS DISPATCHED

EMERGENCY RESPONSE CALLS



2025 CALL DENSITY



THESE HEAT MAPS REPRESENT CALL VOLUME DENSITIES

UPPER MAP: FEDERAL WAY, LAKELAND NORTH & SOUTH AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

LOWER MAP: CALL VOLUME IN DES MOINES AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

SOUTH KING FIRE IN THE COMMUNITY: GIVING BACK AND TEACHING FIRE SAFETY



Fire Safety Starts Young

Our crews enjoyed a wonderful visit with the students and staff at Grace Children's Preschool. Firefighters showed off the engine, demonstrated their protective gear, and talked with kids about fire safety, reminding them that firefighters are their friends. The highlight was exploring the big red truck and learning about the tools firefighters use to help people every day.

Thank you to Grace Children's Preschool for the warm welcome, high fives, and a fun visit with some future firefighters in the making!



Community Steps Up

Despite winter storms canceling some of our Santa Parades this year, the community still showed incredible generosity.

We collected 1,605 pounds of food in the City of Des Moines and 1,671 pounds in Federal Way, totaling more than 3,000 pounds of donations for the Des Moines Area Food Bank, Federal Way Senior Center/ Food Bank/Nutritional Meals Program, and Multi-Service Center.

Thanks to everyone who played a part in this year's effort!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING OUR TEAM, BOOSTING OUR IMPACT



Employee Spotlight: Sherese Gamble, Human Resources Supervisor

Meet Sherese Gamble, our Human Resources Supervisor. Sherese joined the district three and a half years ago as the Workforce Development Program Manager, where she led workforce development and equity programming. She was recently promoted to Human Resources Supervisor.

Sherese brings a strong background in leadership and community engagement. She serves as a board member of the Tacoma Women of Color Collective and is the founder of We Will Thrive Mentoring, reflecting her commitment to uplifting others and strengthening communities.

"My mission is to be a catalyst for change and empowerment—helping individuals become game changers who optimize operations, improve outcomes, and make transformative differences," Sherese said.

In her role, Sherese focuses on fostering an inclusive and resilient workforce through equitable hiring practices, professional development, and a welcoming workplace culture. Her work helps ensure South King Fire continues to evolve to meet the needs of the communities it serves. Please join us in congratulating Sherese Gamble on her promotion!



Welcome Anna Parker to the Community Affairs Office

We are excited to welcome Anna Parker as the new Public Education Specialist. Parker brings a strong background in education and community engagement. She holds a Master of Science in Education and previously taught 4th and 5th grade in Pierce County. She also spent summers working with educators in Namibia, Africa, supporting international learning and collaboration.

"I'm excited to be part of the South King Fire community and to serve the Federal Way and Des Moines communities," Parker said. "I look forward to helping people of all ages learn practical ways to stay safe and prevent emergencies."

In her role, Parker will focus on community risk reduction initiatives across the South King Fire jurisdiction. Her work will include developing a comprehensive Kindergarten–12th grade public education program focused on fire prevention and safety, as well as senior fall prevention education. Parker will also collaborate with the Community Affairs Officer on community safety initiatives such as helmet safety, water safety, child passenger safety, and education about the appropriate use of emergency services. Please join us in welcoming Anna Parker!

SPRING INTO SAFETY: TIPS TO PROTECT

Spring is here, and warmer weather means more time outdoors! Keep your home, yard, and family safe with these tips.



Yard & Garden Safety

- **Clear debris:** Remove dry leaves, sticks, and brush to prevent fires.
- **Tool safety:** Inspect mowers and power tools before use and always wear protective gear.
- **Safe storage:** Keep pesticides, fertilizers, and fuels in well-ventilated areas away from children, pets, and ignition sources.

Spring Storm & Weather Preparedness

- **Lightning safety:** Avoid open fields, tall trees, and water during storms; seek shelter indoors or in a vehicle.
- **Flood readiness:** Have an emergency kit, know evacuation routes, and never walk or drive through floodwaters.
- **Wind hazards:** Secure outdoor furniture and loose items, and inspect property for weak trees or structures.

FROM ACADEMY TO ACTION: MEET OUR NEWEST FIREFIGHTERS



Cheering families, proud mentors, and the sound of boots on the station floor marked a new chapter on February 27, 2026, as our newest firefighters graduated from the Post Academy Recruit program. This ceremony celebrated eleven recruits who have completed their training and are ready to begin serving our community.

“Graduation from the academy marks the transition from learning the fundamentals of firefighting to being entrusted with the care and support of the community,” said Lieutenant Jake Linde.

“It signifies that a firefighter has met the high standards of South King Fire and represents the beginning of a career built on continuous learning, accountability, and commitment to the craft.”

Following fire service tradition, the graduates took the Oath of Office, received their shift assignments, and learned their station locations. Beginning in March 2026, these probationary firefighters will step into their roles as emergency responders, prepared to provide care and protection when it matters most.

This exceptional group brings strong work ethic, dedication, and a shared commitment to public service. As they continue their probationary year, they will grow under the mentorship of experienced firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), gaining the skills and knowledge needed to serve our community with professionalism and integrity.

We invite everyone to join us in congratulating these new firefighters and supporting them as they embark on a meaningful career protecting the residents of the communities we serve.



Fire Chief Woodey rings the bell, a 200-year-old fire service tradition marking the start of a shift (in this case) or the close of a firefighter’s service.

SOUTH KING FIRE (SKF) Information:

SKF provides complimentary blood pressure checks and fire station tours upon appointment.

STATION 62 - HEADQUARTERS
31617 1st Avenue South
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253-839-6234
Business Hours: 8-4 M-F

www.southkingfire.org

Administration

Ryan Woodey, Fire Chief
Dave Michaels, Assistant Chief - Operations
Eric Suckoll, Assistant Chief - Planning
Joe Ganem, Executive Director
Kelsey Barrett, Finance Manager
Sherese Gamble, HR Supervisor
Sean Nichols, Fire Marshal

Board of Commissioners:

Greg Baruso, Chair
Caroline Vadino, Vice Chair
Martese Monroe, Commissioner
Bill Fuller, Commissioner
Craig Burrus, Commissioner