

# MEDIA RELEASE

## ***Northern Lakes Fire Protection District***

Proudly serving the areas of and surrounding Hayden and Rathdrum

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Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\*

Northern Lakes Fire District has been awarded a \$4,510,541.82 grant to hire 12 firefighters to staff a third station 24 hours and 365 days a year.

The Department of Homeland Security, 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant will fund twelve firefighters for three years.

The third station will be in the Garwood area, with two medics and two firefighter EMTs. The funding for this station is not included in this grant, it is secured by financing it over several years. The staffing of the Garwood station will reduce response times and save lives and property. Opening the third station will also reduce insurance premiums for many homeowners, and some who have had their insurance carriers drop them will be able to have their property insured again.

Northern Lakes Fire District has attempted multiple tax levy overrides to increase service and improve response times throughout our fire district, failing five times since 2012. We listened to the public to make growth pay for itself and be fiscally responsible with their tax dollars.

Northern Lakes Fire District's response area is 108 square miles, with approximately 60,000 residents. In 2021 we responded to 6,398 incidents. From 2013 to 2020. Northern Lakes Fire has seen an increase of 52 percent in emergency response.

In January of 2022, the Professional Firefighters of Northern Lakes commissioned a Geographical Information System Emergency Service Response Capabilities Analysis by the

International Association of Fire Fighters. The study showed the National Protection Fire Association Standard 1710 was not met.

- The department reached 39% of EMS incidents within a travel time of 240 seconds and did not meet the NFPA 1710 objective of having the first EMS unit on the scene within 240 seconds of travel time for at least 90% of incidents.
- The first-arriving engine was at the scene of fire incidents within 240 seconds for 38% of the fire incidents. The department did not meet the NFPA 1710 objective of having the first engine at the scene of fire incidents for at least 90% of incidents.
- The population within the NLFD response area increased by 19% between 2010 and 2018. The risk assessment analysis found that in the next five years, the population will increase by up to 2.7% yearly. As a result, it is likely that the number of medical and fire emergencies will increase as well.
- NLFD did not meet the staffing objectives for fire suppression apparatus outlined in NFPA 1710. Engines should be staffed with a minimum of four firefighters, but they are currently staffed by two.
- The department cannot assemble the minimum force of four firefighters within four minutes of travel time, required by the "2 In/2 Out" regulation, on 80% of the response area roads.
- The department does not have sufficient personnel to assemble the minimum forces of 17, 28 and 43 firefighters as are required for low-, medium-, and high-hazard fires.

The study's recommendations to open another station staffed 24/7 will help the department meet NFPA 1710 staffing and travel time objectives. The department would increase the roads that responders could reach within four minutes of travel time by 55%. NLFD would also be able to assemble the minimum force of 17 firefighters required for low-hazard fires on 20% of the jurisdiction roads.

By reducing the demand on the current response units and mutual aid units, the department will provide a more efficient response, thus improving the safety of the NLFD personnel and the citizens of Hayden, Rathdrum, and the nearby communities.

Northern Lakes Fire District will fund future fire stations and engines by collecting new growth's impact and not through property taxes.

The SAFER grant only funds 12 firefighters for three years for the third station. Northern Lakes will begin exploring fiscally responsible options to continue staffing the third station beyond the three years of the grant. With continued growth in Hayden, Rathdrum, Twin Lakes, and Garwood, 108 square mile area, and an increase in emergency response, we strive to be vigilant in improving our response to our citizens to reduce the risk of injuries, loss of properties, and lives.

## ABOUT NORTHERN LAKES FIRE DISTRICT

The Fire District provides an all-hazards response to the greater Hayden, Rathdrum, and Twin Lakes areas in Kootenai County, located in gorgeous North Idaho. We are a department comprised of thirty-nine career firefighters, three Chief Officers, a Fire Marshal, a Deputy Fire Marshal, three administrative support staff, and a fleet mechanic. In addition, all of our firefighters are also certified EMTs and paramedics.

Northern Lakes Fire currently staffs two fire engines and two advanced life support (ALS) ambulances with career staff that respond to more than 6,600 emergency calls annually from two strategically located fire stations. These stations are staffed 24/7/365. Our district is comprised of approximately 108 square miles of lakes, mountains, prairies, and growing cities with a population of more than 60,000 residents

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