

Welcome Chief Lake!

We recently had an opportunity to ask Sauvie Island's new Fire Chief, Chris Lake, a few questions. Here's what Chief Lake had to say.

Hi! You became the Fire Chief for Sauvie Island Fire District this past year. Have you always lived in Oregon? If not, where else have you lived?

I was born in Eugene. I've lived in Oregon most of my life with a short 3 years in the San Francisco area during high school.



Chief Lake's badging ceremony

What led you to a career in the fire service? How long have you been in the fire service? What did you do before you became Chief at Sauvie Island?

My senior year in high school, my family moved to Eastern Oregon. While there, I was introduced to volunteering at our local fire department (back in 1983). The Fire Chief at the time, informed me I could have a career as a firefighter if I were to attend a Fire Science program at Portland Community College.

Fall of 1984, that is exactly what I did. Three years later with an Associates in Fire Science and Paramedic license, I took a job with the City of Pendleton as a firefighter/ medic, January of 1988. A

couple of years later, I moved to the Columbia County area where I worked at Rainier Fire District, St. Helens Fire District (which merged together forming Columbia River Fire and Rescue) and Scappoose Fire District, where I retired as the Operations Division Chief in 2015. I continued to work after leaving Scappoose, but once learning my job was in jeopardy, I began looking for possible jobs back in the fire service leading me to Sauvie Island.

What is your favorite thing (so far) about being the Chief at Sauvie Island Fire?

The community and members of the Fire District are wonderful. I could not imagine working with such great and committed people much less actually getting the opportunity to do so. I am also struck by the Island's beauty every time I go to the Fire Station.

What are some of the unique benefits and challenges with a rural fire district such as Sauvie Island?

Probably the most significant challenge is working with an all "volunteer" Fire District. The people who volunteer have lives and careers and then volunteer above and beyond the lives and careers as a firefighter with our District. Providing training, support and flexibility to those who volunteer and work at the same time poses unique challenges itself. The other side of that is recruiting and retaining enough volunteers to maintain emergency response to our community. Fortunately, we have very dedicated members serving our District.

What are some of the programs and/or services that Sauvie Island Fire offers to the community that you would like people to know about - that you think they may not know?

Above emergency response for emergency medical, fire and rescue, the Fire District offers CPR and Stop the Bleed training to the residence of the Island. We also support Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs) sponsored through the City of Portland and are working towards providing more information to our citizens about self-preparedness.



Sauvie Island Fire Station

We were surprised to learn that Sauvie Island gets approximately one million visitors a year, with visitors outnumbering island residents 1000 to 1! What would you and/or Sauvie Island residents like visitors to know?

It is a wonderful place to visit with the Island's natural beauty, large beach access to the Columbia River and plentiful farms offering produce, plants and flowers to those who come to visit. And it's just minutes away from Portland.