



City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor unveils seismically upgraded and improved fire station

SEATTLE – Mayor Greg Nickels today celebrated the completion of the seismic upgrade and remodel of Fire Station 31 in Northgate.

Improvements made to Fire Station 31 are part of the Fire Levy program, the biggest undertaking in the last 40 years to upgrade, replace and modernize fire stations.

“Once again a dramatic act of nature in another part of the world drives home the urgent need for being prepared for the unthinkable here. While today we celebrate another step toward making Seattle better prepared, our hearts go out to the people of Italy as they continue to deal with the destruction and tragic loss of life resulting from last week’s devastating earthquake,” said Mayor Nickels.

Seattle is making tangible progress toward being the most prepared city in the nation for disasters.

“Seattle residents had the foresight to vote for the Fire Levy in 2003, and now they can see their tax dollars at work across the city,” said Nickels.

Fire Station 31, located at 1319 N. Northgate Way, houses Engine 31, Ladder 5, and Medic 31. Engine 31 is the busiest engine north of the Ship Canal and the third busiest engine company in the city. In 2008, Engine 31 went on more than 3,000 alarms.

Built in 1973, the station did not meet current seismic code. Concrete shear walls and steel bracing were added to brace the building in the event of lateral movement during an earthquake. The 12,452 square-foot facility is built to the “immediate occupancy” standard – the building is designed to be safely occupied following an earthquake.

Other improvements include:

- addition of individual medic sleeping rooms
- bay to house an additional unit in the future
- new insulated roof
- upgraded mechanical systems
- two new air conditioning units on the roof to cool the second floor
- two small, higher efficiency boilers
- remodeled basement to increase functionality. Concrete replaced dirt floors and lighting was added to make the previously unfinished basement more usable for storing bunker gear, emergency cache supplies, suction hoses, emergency power equipment, tools, and supplies.

“We can’t stop the next earthquake or storm from striking Seattle, but we can be prepared to save lives, protect property and pull ourselves up after a disaster,” Nickels said.

The \$4.3 million Fire Station 31 seismic upgrade and remodel was designed by local architects Snyder, Hartung, Kane, and Straus and built by Pellco Construction.

In 2003, Seattle voters approved the Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy, which was designed with lessons learned from the Nisqually earthquake, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and the 1995 Kobe earthquake, among others.

Construction is currently taking place on four fire station projects, including Fire Station 2 in Belltown, Fire Station 17 in the University District, Fire Station 28 in Rainier Valley, and Fire Station 33 in Rainier Beach.

The \$167 million levy is helping Seattle make tremendous progress on getting prepared, including:

- Rebuilding or upgrading 32 neighborhood fire stations to better withstand earthquakes and ensure that the city’s emergency responders are available to help when they are needed most.
- Opening the city’s new state-of-the-art Fire Station 10, Fire Alarm Center, and Emergency Operations Center, located in a 60,333 square foot complex, in 2008.

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- Adding two new fireboats, the flagship Leschi, delivered last year, and the smaller fire and rescue boat, Engine 1, that went into service in 2006. Renovating the Chief Seattle.
- Creating a new Joint Training Facility for firefighters that opened in 2007.
- Providing an emergency water supply for fighting fires. Hardened hydrants at city reservoirs allow firefighters to draw water directly from reservoirs in an emergency.
- Placing emergency supply caches at four locations around the city of Seattle.
- Installing emergency generators at six community centers.

Visit the mayor's Web site at www.seattle.gov/mayor. Get the mayor's inside view on initiatives to promote transportation, public safety, economic opportunity and healthy communities by signing up for The Nickels Newsletter at www.seattle.gov/mayor/newsletter_signup.htm

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