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Snohomish County Airport welcomes new fire chief

Airport hires Joshua Cole, a 27-year veteran leader of the fire service

EVERETT, Wash., October 13, 2021 – After a nationwide search, Snohomish County Airport has hired Joshua R. Cole to serve as Paine Field’s new fire chief starting October 15, 2021.

“Paine Field is welcoming a highly skilled and experienced fire service executive to lead our fire department,” stated Arif Ghouse, Snohomish County Airport Director. “Chief Cole brings an extensive knowledge base and a wealth of experience to support Paine Field Fire Department’s core mission. We are thrilled to have Chief Cole join the Paine Field team.”

“It is a privilege to be selected to lead the dedicated men and women of the Paine Field Fire Department,” said Chief Cole. “I look forward to building relationships and providing the highest level of fire and emergency response to the Paine Field community.”

Chief Cole brings more than 27 years of experience and leadership in the fire service. He started his career in the fire service as a contract firefighter for the United States military at Johnston Island, Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and Radford Army Ammunitions Plant in Radford, Virginia. He spent almost 14 years at the Augusta Regional Airport Fire Department in Augusta, Georgia, steadily moving up within the Fire Department as firefighter, Lieutenant, and Captain. He returned to Kwajalein Atoll Fire Department for five years, serving as Captain and Assistant Chief of Operations. In 2017, Chief Cole joined the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to serve as Deputy Fire Chief at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. At JFK, Chief Cole was charged with supervising 93 uniformed and civilian employees and a budget of \$26 million.

Chief Cole has a Bachelor of Science in Fire Administration from Columbia Southern University. He is an Airport Certified Employee (ACE) and a certified Airport Master Firefighter from the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE).

Ghouse expressed his utmost appreciation to Captain Brett Blankenship, who has been serving as interim fire chief since February 2021.

About Snohomish County Airport

Paine Field is a unique airport. It is home to over 500 aircraft, including small, single engine recreational aircraft, corporate jets, vintage Warbirds and brand-new Boeing aircraft. Located about 30 miles north of downtown Seattle, the airport offers high quality aviation facilities, including an FAA tower, Cat 1 ILS, Part 139 certification, FBO services and good access to Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, and Vancouver, B.C.

The [airport's economic impact](#) is estimated at over 158,000 jobs (over 46,000 direct) and an output of almost \$60 billion annually.

Paine Field Airport Fire Department, with a staff of 22 professional firefighters, provides 24-hour fire services including firefighting, emergency medical aid, hazardous material, and other incident response at Snohomish County Airport.

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