



FIRE CHIEF

\$97,248 - \$109,392 DOQ (HIRING RANGE)

Plus Excellent Benefits. Salary will increase by 2% on June 21, 2025

Apply by

March 9, 2025

(First Review. Open Until Filled)



THE COMMUNITY



Nestled in the picturesque Grande Ronde Valley in Eastern Oregon, La Grande is a vibrant and welcoming community known for its stunning mountain views, rich history, and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities. With a population of just over 13,000, La Grande blends small-town charm with modern amenities, creating an engaging environment for families, outdoor enthusiasts, and professionals alike.

La Grande is surrounded by natural beauty, offering year-round outdoor adventures such as hiking, fishing, camping, and skiing. The city is home to Eastern Oregon University, which enriches the local culture, provides educational opportunities, and adds a lively energy to the community. Affordable living, a strong community spirit, and easy access to many amenities enhance the region’s appeal.



Situated at the eastern base of the Blue Mountains, La Grande is part of one of the largest enclosed circular valleys in the United States, encompassing over a million acres of fertile soil framed by snow-capped peaks. This unique geography, combined with a stable economy, makes the area well-suited for manufacturing, distribution, and service industries.

La Grande offers a quality of life that few communities can match. Residents enjoy cultural activities, a robust Farmers' Market, a vibrant downtown, and recreational opportunities just steps away. Whether exploring the trails, enjoying a book at the new public library, or strolling through one of the city’s many parks, La Grande invites visitors and residents alike to experience its charm and consider making it their home.



THE CITY

The City of La Grande, Oregon, operates under a Council-Manager form of government comprising seven members, including the Mayor, who serves a 2-year term, and six Councilors, each serving 4-year terms.

The City has a workforce of 140.59 FTEs and a total 2024/2025 adopted budget of \$69,285,963, including \$48,526,143 in total appropriations and \$20,759,820 reserved for future use. The city provides a wide range of essential services from several departments that include the Building Division, City Manager’s Office, City Recorder, Community Development, Economic Development, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Library, Municipal Court, Parks and Recreation, Police, and Public Works.

THE DEPARTMENT

The La Grande Fire Department (LGFD) is a versatile and highly skilled team providing a wide range of critical services to the community which include fire suppression, advanced life support (ALS) ambulance services within the Union County Ambulance Service Area, rescue operations, vehicle extrication, swift water rescue, public education, occupancy inspections, juvenile fire setter intervention, and public assistance.

Operating on a 2024/2025 budget of \$4,027,426, the department has a staff of 22.8 FTEs, which includes the Fire Chief, a Deputy Chief, an Administrative Assistant, 3 Captains, 15 Firefighters, and 9 EMT casuals. In 2024, the department responded to 3,597 calls utilizing a modern fleet of apparatus, including two engines (2020 Rosenbauer and 2005 Spartan), a 2010 Spartan 102' ladder truck, two 2023 Type 6 wildland engines, a 2006 rescue vehicle, and four ambulances, including a 2022 Northstar, a 2019 Northstar, and a 2025 Northstar arriving in June. The fleet also includes command and utility vehicles such as a 2023 Chevrolet 1500 for the Deputy Chief, a 2020 Chevrolet 2500 for the Chief, and additional travel and utility vehicles.



THE POSITION

Under the general direction of the City Manager, the Fire Chief provides administrative direction and leadership for all functions, operations and department personnel in accomplishing the Fire Department's mission of protecting life and property. Key responsibilities include emergency response leadership, budget preparation, policy development, staff performance management, and fostering positive relationships with mutual aid partners and the community. This role requires someone who is a strategic leader committed to operational excellence, team development, and public safety. To view the full responsibilities of the Fire Chief, please view the job description found [here](#).



OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

- LGFD provides ALS services within the city and to neighboring communities. The new Chief will need to keep a constant eye on unit utilization to ensure appropriate coverage and response capability and reliability.
- LGFD operates out of a single station. Each shift is overseen by a Captain who serves as both a company officer and shift commander. Evaluating the administrative workload of this dual role will be essential to ensuring operational efficiency.
- The local hospital and La Grande Rural Fire Protection District (LGRFPD) are two key partnerships that will require constant attention from the incoming Chief. The fire department maintains an excellent relationship with the local hospital and its staff, resulting in quick clearance times. Additionally, LGRFPD provides valuable support for fire suppression and EMS responses, with twice monthly joint training sessions to strengthen collaboration and coordination.
- The department is in good financial condition and has historically relied on grant funding for capital items. A leader with grant writing or peer review experience is highly desirable.
- There is a desire to engage in wildland deployments, which would provide professional development opportunities, valuable experience, and potentially new revenue streams for the department.
- LGFD and LGRFPD enjoy a close partnership, including an automatic aid agreement, relying on one another for suppression and EMS responses.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education and Experience:

- A bachelor's degree in fire science, fire service administration, public or business administration or a related field is preferred.
- Ten (10) years of broad fire department experience with increasing levels of responsibility in management and supervisory positions, including four (4) years of experience in an administrative capacity. Experience in municipal fire departments with EMS responsibilities is preferred.
- Any equivalent combination of education, experience and training which provides the knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the work will be considered.

Required Licenses and Certifications:

- NFPA Firefighter I and II certifications.
- Hazardous Materials Operations Level certification.
- NFPA Fire Officer I certification.
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic or higher certification.



Necessary Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- The ability to be present and engaged, and provide visible leadership within the organization and the community.
- Proven fire service leadership experience, ideally from a similar-sized or larger agency.
- Broad administrative experience encompassing collective bargaining, financial and budget management, fire prevention, fleet operations, grant writing, succession planning, human resources, training, EMS, and suppression.
- A strong commitment to fostering a respectful, welcoming, positive, and inclusive work environment that values all members.
- Demonstrated ability to be an effective team player within the City's Management Team, prioritizing the collective success of the entire City over solely focusing on the Fire Department's needs.
- The ability to adapt and demonstrate flexibility in supporting members to make sound decisions even when policies or procedures don't explicitly address a situation.
- Proven ability to encourage and support staff through delegation and empowerment, fostering professional growth for current and future leaders.
- Strong business and political acumen to balance physical and financial needs while planning for the future.
- A proven track record of building trust and strong relationships within and outside the agency, including the ability to model accountability, uphold department standards, and collaborate effectively with neighboring agencies, and labor unions.

- Experience fostering positive labor relations and working collaboratively with unions to solve operational challenges.
- Exceptional communication skills, including active listening and a transparent approach to sharing information and decisions.
- High ethical standards and integrity, with a commitment to transparency and fostering open communication across all levels of the organization.
- Ability to engage staff in decision-making processes, ensuring clarity and inclusivity.
- Strong conflict resolution skills and the ability to manage disagreements directly and effectively.
- Proven capability to develop and implement major programs and projects, ensuring fiscal responsibility and alignment with community needs.
- A willingness to respond after hours to major incidents and emergencies, providing leadership and support to staff.
- Ability to delegate effectively while maintaining accountability for department performance and outcomes.
- Skilled in balancing stakeholder needs, including those of the community, staff, and city leadership.

**To learn more about the
City of La Grande and the La Grande
Fire Department, please visit:
www.cityoflagrande.org**

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$97,248 - \$109,392 DOQ (Hiring Range)**
- Medical/Vision Insurance
- VEBA
- Dental Insurance
- LifeFlight
- Life Insurance
- Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance
- Optional AFLAC Coverages
- Retirement is with Oregon PERS beginning the first of the month following six (6) months of employment, the Employer contribution is determined by PERS, the Employee contribution is 6% which is tax deferred. The City will contribute 6% of gross wages to a deferred compensation plan in lieu of an employer pick-up of the 6% employee PERS contribution for the duration of employment. During the first six (6) months of employment, the City will contribute a percentage of gross wages into a deferred compensation plan equal to the employer PERS contribution.
- Optional Nationwide Retirement Options.
- Vacation
- Sick Leave
- Executive Leave
- 12 Paid Holidays, which includes two floating holidays.
- Relocation Assistance up to \$3,500

To view a detailed summary of the benefits provided, please view the attachment found [here](#).

The City of La Grande is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **March 9, 2025** (first review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to **www.prothman.com** and click on "**Open Recruitments**", select "**City of La Grande, OR – Fire Chief**" and click "**Apply Online**," or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in. If you are a veteran and wish to request veterans' preference credit, please indicate that in your cover letter, and complete and submit the veterans' preference form posted on the website as instructed on the form. Photo credit to Eric Valentine (Pg. 4 Top Right)



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