



MONTANA

FIRE CHIEF

\$190,000 - \$205,000

Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by

June 28, 2026

(First Review, Open Until Filled)



THE COMMUNITY



Big Sky sits in the Madison Range of southwest Montana, tucked between Bozeman and Yellowstone National Park and surrounded on three sides by national forest. Lone Mountain rises above 11,000 feet over an alpine valley that stretches from the Gallatin River canyon up to ski terrain at 7,400 feet, a landscape that defines daily life here as much as it draws visitors from around the world.



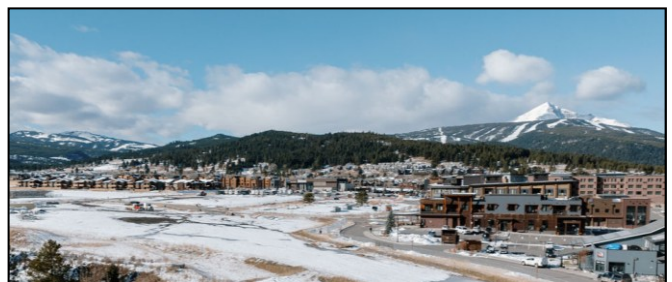
The community is unincorporated and spans two counties, with no city government and no traditional municipal boundary. What it has instead is a remarkable civic ecosystem: a 4% resort tax that has reinvested nearly \$100 million back into the community over three decades, a network of nonprofits and special districts that deliver everything from housing to healthcare, and a culture of collaboration among residents, businesses, developers, and public agencies who share a long view of the place.



Big Sky's roughly 3,600 year-round residents include working families, longtime locals, seasonal professionals, and a growing population drawn by the lifestyle and the work. In peak season, that number climbs past 20,000 as visitors arrive for skiing at Big Sky Resort, one of the largest ski areas in North America, along with fly fishing on the Blue Ribbon Gallatin, hiking and biking across thousands of acres of public land, and quick access to Yellowstone's west entrance. The community is anchored by Big Sky Resort, the Yellowstone Club, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, and Moonlight Basin, alongside the walkable Town Center and the historic Meadow Village.

This is a community defined by its setting and its standards. Residents value transparency, professionalism, and stewardship, and they expect a public safety organization that matches the place: sophisticated, forward-thinking, and deeply connected. Growth is constant, the wildland-urban interface surrounds every neighborhood, and the work of building resilience in a mountain valley with limited access routes is real and consequential.

For those who want to live where they recreate, lead where it matters, and help shape the future of a nationally recognized mountain community, Big Sky offers a rare combination of beauty, opportunity, and purpose.



THE DEPARTMENT

The Big Sky Fire Department (BSFD) is governed by an elected Board of Trustees that sets district policy, approves the annual budget, and supervises the Fire Chief. The department operates as a single fire district spanning both Gallatin and Madison counties, with funding drawn primarily from property mill levies within the district and supplemented by Big Sky Resort Area District resort-tax allocations and state and federal grants. The Department operates on a budget of approximately \$10 million, with \$2.35 million dedicated to capital acquisitions. BSFD is staffed by 41 FTEs plus seasonal personnel assigned to a Fire Module. The organization is structured under the Fire Chief four Division Chiefs, three Battalion Chiefs, and a full-time Training Captain. Personnel are represented by IAFF Local 4732.

BSFD is a full-service, all-hazards career agency protecting 79 square miles of south-central Montana from two stations staffed 24/7/365: Station 1, the headquarters in Westfork Meadows (Gallatin County), and Station 2 on Lone Mountain Trail near Big Sky Resort (Madison County). Additionally, Station 3 is nearing completion, and is located at 220 Inspiration Point Rd. Formed in 1971 as the Gallatin Canyon Volunteer Fire Department and renamed BSFD in 2009, the organization completed its transition to a fully career force in 2018 after 47 years of volunteer service. BSFD's core values are organized around the BSFD acronym: Betterment, Safety, Fortitude, and Dedication.

BSFD delivers ALS transport emergency medical services with inter-facility transport capability, structural and wildland fire suppression, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, and a robust Community Risk Reduction program covering fire and life safety inspections, plan review, building and development inspections, wildfire preparedness, and home risk assessments. The department also operates the Big Sky Wildfire Hub.

In 2025, BSFD responded to 1,560 emergency incidents, with approximately 48% being EMS related. BSFD can field up to three ALS ambulances during peak periods. Its modern frontline fleet includes three engines, two brand-new BME engines entering service, two ladder trucks, three newer Type 1 ambulances, and a brand-new transport van.



THE POSITION

Reporting to the elected Board of Trustees the Fire Chief serves as the chief executive officer of the Big Sky Fire Department, providing executive-level leadership across daily administration, operations, asset and risk management, finances, and regulatory compliance.

The Chief is responsible for the safe and effective delivery of all department services and leads the development of policies, strategic plans, and the annual operating and capital budgets. The role also requires cultivating strong, collaborative relationships with the Board, the Big Sky Resort Area District, mutual aid partners, federal land management agencies, IAFF Local 4732, and the broader community.

The successful candidate will bring the highest standards of integrity, ethics, accountability, and transparency, along with the judgment, innovation, and foresight required to lead a progressive all-hazards organization through continued growth, wildfire risk, and the operational complexity of a rapidly evolving mountain resort community.

For a complete list of responsibilities, please review the full job description found [here](#).



OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

A Dedicated Team and a Culture of Safety:

BSFD has a dedicated staff that delivers exceptional administrative and frontline services. The new Fire Chief will continue to be an advocate for firefighter safety, with particular attention to firefighter and EMS responder mental health, professional support, and a culture that values safety, accountability, and service.

Navigating a Changing Budget Landscape:

Due to an unforeseen County tax calculation error, there has been a \$2.3M reduction in the 2026-2027 budget, which has created strain within the community because of an over-collection of tax funds. In response, the Department was able to renegotiate the Interlocal Agreement with the Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD) to help make up for part of the lost tax revenue. The next Fire Chief will need to help guide the District through this changing financial landscape with transparency, sound planning, and careful stewardship of public resources.

Strategic Capital Investments: New Fire Station 3 is nearing completion, with estimated completion in December 2026, and the fire apparatus for the new station has already been purchased. The station was funded by a Rural Improvement District to help address response times, sustain a solid ISO rating, and improve coverage for the wildland-urban interface. Additionally, property adjacent to the Training Center was purchased and was essential to securing long-term access to the training center property. The next Fire Chief will have the opportunity to support these important capital investments while continuing to plan for the District's future facility, apparatus, training, and service delivery needs.



Excellence in Emergency Medical Services:

The department operates an excellent ALS response system and completes approximately 250 emergency transports annually from the Critical Access Hospital to Bozeman. The next Fire Chief will be responsible for supporting continued excellence in EMS delivery, maintaining strong clinical and operational standards, and ensuring the department is prepared to meet the emergency medical needs of residents, visitors, employees, and the broader Big Sky community.

Strengthening Community Partnerships and Wildfire Preparedness: BSFD enjoys a strong partnership with multiple Neighborhood Ambassadors that support the Firewise program. The next Fire Chief will have the opportunity to continue strengthening these relationships while advancing community risk reduction, wildfire preparedness, home risk assessments, public education, and collaboration with residents, neighborhoods, partner agencies, and regional stakeholders.

Pursuing an Improved ISO Rating: BSFD recently completed the ISO audit process and is currently awaiting the final report. The audit was requested with the goal of securing a more favorable rating that reflects the department's ongoing investments and improvements in service delivery. The next Fire Chief will play an important role in building on this work by continuing to strengthen operational readiness, staffing, training, apparatus, facilities, water supply coordination, prevention, and documentation practices that support effective service and long-term community protection.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Required Education & Experience:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in Fire Science, Fire Administration, Business, or Public Administration **OR** a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college **AND** graduation from the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program or designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence as a Chief Fire Officer (CFO).
- A minimum of five (5) years of directly related departmental or administrative management experience, and three (3) years of professional strategic planning, project management, or program development, **OR** an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the position.
- A valid Montana driver's license by time of hire.
- Must be bondable and insurable under the District's insurance carriers.

Preferred Education & Experience:

- Experience working with elected governing bodies and being supervised by an elected Board of Trustees.
- Experience in collective bargaining and labor relations.
- Experience and specialized training in hazardous materials response and technical rescue skills.
- Current certification as a National Registry Emergency Medical Technician.
- A master's degree in a related field.



Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Thorough knowledge of department administration, financial management, fire suppression and prevention, incident command, emergency management, wildland-urban interface issues, inspections, emergency medical services, EMS transport, medical documentation, and billing.
- Knowledge of the administrative duties and responsibilities of a fire protection district, including accountability for community assets, District resources, capital expenditures, fleet, grants, strategic planning, succession planning, human resources, mentorship, and training.
- The ability to exercise independent judgment in creating and implementing policies and procedures, identifying departmental operational needs and goals, supporting strategic planning, developing and managing the District's annual budget, implementing safety practices and training, and ensuring compliance with all applicable laws.
- Knowledge of and the ability to interpret District and Department policies and procedures, Montana state fire code, relevant NFPA, OSHA, NIOSH, and EPA standards, ordinances, and applicable local, state, and federal laws.
- The ability to serve as a present, visible, and engaged leader in the organization and community while working effectively with elected officials, organized labor, Department members, partner agencies, and the Board of Trustees.
- The skill to keep the Board of Trustees informed on issues affecting the agency, advocate for the members, the District, and the community, and balance the physical and financial needs of the District while planning for the future.
- The ability to provide vision, build internal and external relationships, engage routinely with staff and the community, and demonstrate good character, emotional intelligence, sound judgment, personal initiative, confidentiality, and flexibility.
- The ability to support a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive work environment that values all members, avoids micromanaging problem-solving processes or routine work, supports work-life balance, and provides a safe place to learn, innovate, make mistakes, and improve.
- The skill to serve as a positive role model and leader who inspires great performance, sets the pace for accountability, learns the values of the organization, nurtures its culture, and capitalizes on the knowledge and abilities of existing staff.

- The ability to apply a broad administrative background and experience to effectively manage the complexities of a modern fire department from a similar size or larger agency.
- Experience supporting mentoring, professional development, succession planning, and leadership at all levels, including decision-making at the lowest and most appropriate level based on area of responsibility.
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills, including active listening, careful consideration of information, and clear, direct, and concise communication with members, the Board, labor representatives, and the community.
- The ability to listen, make timely and ethical decisions, pivot in a different direction when needed, serve as an honest broker during both good and bad times, share the “why” behind final decisions, and include stakeholders through transparency and continuous improvement.
- Exceptional organization and time management skills, with the ability to prepare professional reports and documents, perform data analytics, use social media, Word, and Excel, write grants, and develop and implement policies and procedures.
- Experience with recruitment, training, personnel development, coaching, mentoring, performance accountability, corrective action, and disciplinary matters, with the ability to apply programs and standard operating procedures in a firm, fair, and consistent manner.
- Experience in positive labor relations and collective bargaining, with the ability to see the Union as a partner in planning and problem-solving key issues, meet with the Union on a regular basis, foster open communication, build trust, and support effective labor-management relationships.
- Knowledge of wildland and structure suppression, operational assignments, and operational readiness gained through fire service experience.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$190,000 - \$205,000 DOQ**
- Health insurance, dental, and vision plan paid 100% for employee, spouse, and family.
- Aflac cancer paid by employer and optional Aflac plans for employee
- 457B option (employer match frozen)
- Montana Firefighters United Retirement (FURS) Pension System.



To learn more about the Big Sky Fire Department and the local community, please visit:

www.bigskyfire.org

www.visitbigsky.com

The Big Sky Fire Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **June 28, 2026** (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 "**Big Sky Fire Department, MT – Fire Chief**" and click "**Apply Online**," or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.



www.prothman.com

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