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EMS calls on the rise for Asotin County Fire District 1

Medical emergencies accounted for 90% of all calls in 2015

Clarkston, Wash. – Call volumes increased eight percent for Asotin County Fire District 1 in 2015 compared to the previous year. The fire district responded to 2,626 calls for help and medical emergencies accounted for 90% of all calls in the same time period. Fire Chief Noel Hardin says that number is expected to increase as the local population ages.

Calls for emergency medical service (EMS) in Asotin County Fire District 1's service territory have increased 38% since voters approved funding for an EMS levy in 2011. Funding for the program allows the fire district to provide Basic Life Support with Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Advanced Life Support with Paramedics through the fire district's partnership with the city of Lewiston.

The EMS levy will expire next year, and the fire district likely will ask voters to renew it sometime this fall at the same rate of \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. That means the owner of a \$200,000 home would continue to pay \$100 per year or approximately \$8.33 per month for a 24-hour Paramedic response.

Asotin County Fire District 1 is the only fire district in the county to guarantee a fire and EMS response 24-hours a day. The EMS levy pays for emergency personnel, training and certifications, ambulances, maintenance, medical equipment, first aid supplies, and equipment replacement.

The Board of Fire Commissioners also is considering asking voters to remove the expiration date. A permanent EMS levy would provide a stable funding source for the fire district's most widely-used emergency service and help the agency plan long-term to improve the program. It also would save money on election costs, which can be as much as \$25,000 every time the fire district needs to be on the ballot.

"We feel this money would better serve our community by paying for life-saving equipment or personnel," said Chief Hardin.

The Board will hold two public meetings later this spring about the EMS levy renewal. The community will be invited to attend and provide comment.

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Asotin County Fire District 1 provides fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical service (EMS), river rescue, oil spill response and wildland fire protection to 14,000 people over 120 square miles of land and 35 miles of shoreline. Thirty-two volunteer firefighters, 28 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and 35 paramedics (through a partnership with Lewiston) respond to an average of 2,600 calls per year – 90% of which are EMS-related.