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Board of Fire Commissioners passes fire levy lid lift resolution
Ballot measure planned for November General Election

CLARKSTON, WASH. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Asotin County Fire District 1 unanimously approved a resolution asking voters to approve a fire levy lid lift during the November General Election. If approved by voters, the fire levy would return to \$1.06 per \$1,000 of assessed property value – the same rate it was in 1995.

Asotin County Fire District 1 formed in 1951. This is the first time in its history that voters will be asked to approve an increase in funding for the fire levy.

Call volumes have been steadily increasing (13% since 2011), and the fire district is ready. It has expanded the volunteer firefighter program, and purchased land with a building that will serve as a larger fire station and training facility for firefighters. This station, funded in part with a \$750,000 federal grant, will accommodate district volunteers, apparatus and equipment for the next 50 years.

“Our area is growing and we need adequate facilities, apparatus and personnel to respond,” said Chief Noel Hardin. “The lid lift will provide the resources to meet the increased demand for emergency services.”

A portion of the lid lift will be used to finish the station project and pay cash to replace aging apparatus instead of financing these projects or purchases which costs taxpayers more with interest payments. In addition to saving lives, these projects are important to maintain the fire district’s insurance rating which is lined to the amount homeowners pay in insurance premiums.

The maximum a fire district is allowed to levy is \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, but Chief Hardin says they don’t need that much. Fire District 1 is asking voters to return the fire levy from 72 cents to \$1.06 per \$1,000. This would cost the owner of a \$200,000 home an additional \$5.66 per month (\$68 per year). This amount is sufficient to finish the station, maintain emergency service levels and protect its insurance rating with the state.

“We are a pretty lean and efficient operation,” he said. “This is due, in large part, to the women and men who volunteer to respond to fire and emergency medical calls in our area. Their service saves our taxpayers about \$1 million per year. We couldn’t do this without them.”

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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. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state. Learn more about Asotin County Fire District 1 by visiting their web site www.acfd1.org or Facebook page /asotincountyfd1.