



Clallam County Fire District 3

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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How Are Emergency Services Funded at Clallam County Fire District 3?

SEQUIM, WASH. – Clallam County Fire District 3 wants to make sure taxpayers know how emergency services are funded for area residents. The fire district is working hard to improve communication with taxpayers about this issue. The fire district has a new newsletter, web site (www.ccf3.org), Twitter handle (@ClallamFD3), and Facebook page (/ClallamFD3) that has more than 800 “likes.”

The fire district primarily funds emergency medical service and fire suppression through two property tax levies. Over time, these levy rates fall as property values rise, which limits the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus a one percent increase allowed by law.

The one percent increase in revenue is not keeping up with the cost to provide service through inflation or increasing call volumes. In 2017, Clallam County Fire District 3 responded to 7,224 emergency calls. Emergency call volumes for the fire district have increased 33 percent in seven years. EMS accounts for 85 percent of those calls, which is not surprising considering the median age in the Sequim area is 59. The fire district also responds to fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, and motor vehicle accidents.

Higher call volumes mean added costs for personnel, apparatus maintenance, equipment and medical supplies. The fire district is now directing all its resources into responding to calls, which leaves nothing to hire additional staff, replace apparatus, and improve or expand its facilities. It turned down a grant to hire additional firefighters because of how the matching funds requirement would impact the fire district financially.

Starting next year, the fire district will have to draw down reserve accounts just to respond to emergency calls. Having adequate reserve accounts is necessary for the financial well-being of the fire district. And, financial solvency is the reason that Fire District 3 is considering asking voters to approve a lid lift for its general levy during the November General Election.

Voters originally approved a general levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2004. Since that time, it has fallen to \$1.26. If approved, the 24-cent lid lift would be an additional \$60 per year (\$5 per month) for the owner of a \$250,000 home. Funding would be used to maintain emergency service levels, improve staffing where possible, train personnel, and fund some facility and apparatus needs.

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Since 1914 residents of Clallam County have volunteered their time and financial support to provide emergency services for the greater Sequim community. Today Clallam County Fire District 3 provides a 24-hour fire and emergency medical response to 30,000 people with a combination of volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel. We respond to an average of 7,300 emergency calls per year, and appreciate the support from our community.