

ASOTIN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 NEWS

Winter 2016-17

Chief's Corner

Welcome to 2017! We have a big year ahead of us at Asotin County Fire District 1 and I want to share some important information with you.

First of all, thank you for supporting our levy for emergency medical service last year! Your support means that we can continue to provide this valuable, lifesaving service.

Fire District 1 is unique in that it is "owner operated." Our firefighters and EMTs are your friends, family members and neighbors – all who volunteer their time to save lives and property. This staffing model saves our taxpayers more than \$1,000,000 annually.

In 2017, we are looking to expand our volunteer program to meet the increasing demand for emergency service. Call volumes have increased 38% since 2010, and more growth is expected for our community.

High call volumes mean added wear and tear on our apparatus and equipment. We have a planned

replacement schedule for fire engines, ambulances and water tenders to make sure we can reach you in an emergency.

We continue to make progress on the fire station project. We secured a large federal grant to help pay for renovations, but it was less than expected. Some voter-approved funding will be necessary to finish the project, which is what we have communicated all along.

Fire District 1 has the lowest levy rate for fire protection and EMS in the county. This is possible because of our dedicated volunteers and the support of our community. Thank you for partnering with us to save lives and property.

Sincerely,

NOEL HARDIN
Fire Chief



Another Clean Audit for Fire District 1

This year marks more than 20 years of clean audits for Fire District 1!

Emergency services are funded through two levies paid through property taxes. Voters renewed a levy for emergency medical service at 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value last year. Our fire levy, which provides a majority of funding, has fallen from \$1.06 in 1995 to 72 cents per \$1,000 in 2017.

Fire District 1 operates under a balanced budget, and a three-member Board of Fire Commissioners are elected by the community to make spending decisions for the agency. Every three years, the fire district is audited for its financial and accountability practices by the

Washington State Auditor's Office.

The audit is designed to ensure compliance and adequate safeguarding of public resources, and includes a review of internal controls for the fire district. The audit process involves performing procedures to see how the fire district uses public resources and complies with state laws and regulations.

Community members can review the report by visiting the Washington State Auditor's web site at <http://portal.sao.wa.gov/reportsearch>. The next accountability audit will take place in 2019, and cover the years 2016-2018.



ASOTIN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1

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New Communications

Asotin County Fire District 1 launched a website last year to serve as a resource for community members to find information about their local fire district. Have you checked it out yet? www.acfd1.org.

And, if you're on Facebook, please "Like"

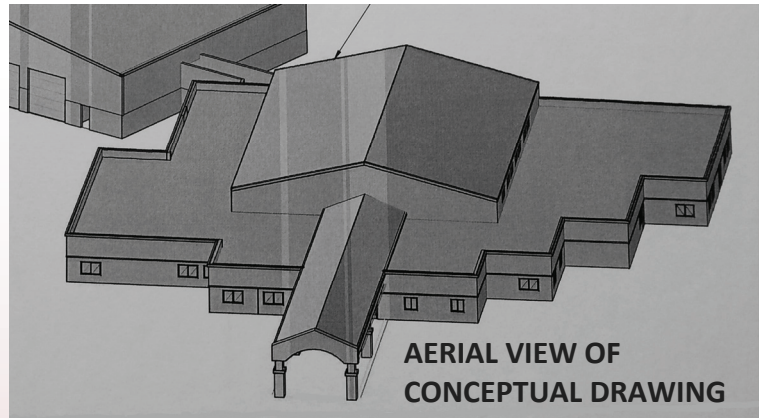


our page at www.facebook.com/asotincountyfd1 to receive regular updates about your fire district!

Station Project Update

Fire District 1 has needed a larger station for some time to improve its emergency response capabilities. New stations are expensive, and our goal has been to minimize costs for taxpayers as the project moves forward. Here's what we've done so far:

- Purchased property with an existing building that will be renovated into the larger station. Renovating this building will save taxpayers approximately \$3 million compared to constructing a brand new fire station.
- Funding the architectural plans, state and federal permits for the project out of existing revenue. Paying cash for these types of expenses reduces the amount of money the fire district might need to borrow.
- Applied for and received a \$750,000 federal grant last fall to fund the building renovations. This minimizes the amount of funding we need to ask from the community.



**AERIAL VIEW OF
CONCEPTUAL DRAWING**

Fire District 1 originally requested \$1 million toward the project, which was the maximum allowed under the grant program. However, the federal government reduced the total amount of funding for projects to \$750,000 in the middle of the application process. As a result, we anticipate asking our community for some funding to finish the project.

Currently, the facility is rented by an area church and used for fire district training and community meeting space. Once completed, the larger station will provide Fire District 1 with the space to accommodate firefighters, training, apparatus and equipment for the next 60 plus years.