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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Asotin County Fire District 1 plans for apparatus replacement**  
*Paying cash means no interest payments for taxpayers*

CLARKSTON, WASH. – Apparatus and equipment are essential to help a fire district respond quickly to an emergency call. Like many agencies, Asotin County Fire District 1 has a schedule for replacing large capital items, such as fire engines and water tenders, before they become unreliable. Fire district officials say a portion of a possible levy lid lift would go towards apparatus replacement.

“Paying cash instead of financing these purchases saves our taxpayers money on interest payments,” said Fire Chief Noel Hardin. “That makes good financial sense.”

A typical fire engine can cost as much as \$600,000 and has a life span of approximately 20 years. Fire District 1 has three fire engines in service, all of which are about 10 years apart in age. The oldest is from 1994 and must be replaced in a few years. It can take up to two years from the time a fire engine is ordered to when it is actually delivered.

Fire District 1 also plans to replace a water tender from 1997. This type of firefighting apparatus is used for structure and wildland fires, and is critical for areas that don’t have fire hydrants or an adequate water supply.

Brush trucks are another key piece of equipment that is used in wildland firefighting. The fire district has five of these vehicles that cover all different terrain, and needs to replace two in the next five years as cash becomes available. One unit doubles as a quick response unit for medical emergencies, as well.

Emergency services at Fire District 1 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. The fire levy, which provides a majority of funding, has fallen from \$1.06 in 1995 to 72 cents per \$1,000 in 2017.

Fire Chief Noel Hardin says that the Board of Fire Commissioners is considering asking voters to “lift the lid” on the fire levy back to \$1.06 per \$1,000 in 2017. It would be the first time Fire District 1 has asked voters for an increase in the history of the agency, which formed in 1951.

“We will have a public process this summer before any final decision is made,” said Chief Hardin. “However, we cannot fund these purchases with current revenue.”

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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](http://www.acfd1.org) or Facebook page /asotincountyfd1.*