**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Rising calls and costs strain fire district**

*Board of Commissioners to consider EMS levy lid lift; public invited*

CLARKSTON, Wash. – Asotin County Fire District 1 (ACFD1) is struggling to keep pace with growing emergency medical service (EMS) demands and rising costs. Ninety percent of the 3,000 annual calls the district answers are EMS-related. That is a 50% increase in demand since voters last approved the EMS levy in 2016.

The ACFD1 Board of Fire Commissioners is considering asking the community to restore funding through an EMS levy lid lift.

The current EMS levy, originally set at $0.50 per $1,000 of assessed property value, has dropped to $0.36 due to state revenue limits. Meanwhile, the cost of essential equipment has skyrocketed—ambulances have increased from $200,000 to over $300,000, and fire engines have more than doubled to $1.2 million.

“More calls require more funding for personnel, equipment, and supplies. Right now, we are struggling to maintain the service levels our community needs,” said Fire Chief Noel Hardin.

Restoring the EMS levy to the previous amount approved by voters would allow the fire district to address staffing needs, replace aging ambulances, and purchase lifesaving equipment like cardiac monitors and defibrillators.

If approved, the 14-cent lid lift would cost the owner of a $300,000 home an additional $3.50 per month, or $42.00 per year. Residents who meet income and eligibility requirements would still qualify for property tax exemptions.

The ACFD1 Board of Fire Commissioners will hold a public meeting on **Tuesday, March 11 at 5 p.m. at 2377 Appleside Blvd.** in Clarkston to discuss placing an EMS levy lid lift on the August Primary Election ballot. Residents are encouraged to attend and take part in the conversation.

For more information, visit www.acfd1.org or contact Asotin County Fire District 1 at 509-758-5181.

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*Asotin County Fire District 1 provides fire suppression, emergency medical service, and river rescue to 15,000 people over 120 square miles in the Southeast corner of Washington. ACFD1 is the only fire district in the county to guarantee a fire and EMS response 24‐hours a day. The department relies primarily on volunteers to respond to an average of 3,000 calls per year, over 90% of which are EMS-related. Learn more at* [*www.acfd1.org*](http://www.acfd1.org)*.*