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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Grants stretch tax dollars further at Asotin County Fire District 1**

CLARKSTON, WASH. – Asotin County Fire District 1 recently applied for a grant to replace all the self-contained breathing apparatus, called “SCBAs” for its firefighters. If successful, the fire district would receive \$250,000 to replace the equipment in the next few years.

“Grants are not a substitute for regular revenue,” said Fire Chief Noel Hardin. “But, they do help stretch local tax dollars further.”

Fire District 1 has secured two substantial grants in the past few years. The first was \$150,000 to replace an aging ambulance through the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) programs under the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

The second was the largest in the fire district’s history: \$750,000 from the Washington State Department of Commerce to renovate an existing building into a larger fire station that will serve the district’s needs for the next 50 years.

Fire District 1 originally applied for \$1 million from the granting agency to finish the project. However, the maximum grant award amount was reduced in the middle of the application process. The station is currently in design phase with construction expected to begin in late September.

The fire district will have a fire levy lid lift on the November election ballot to pay for station improvements and to replace aging apparatus and equipment. Chief Hardin says that fire district prefers to pay cash for capital improvements instead of taking out loans, which costs taxpayers more due to interest payments.

Fire District 1 formed in 1951, and has never asked voters to increase the fire levy in its history. 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. This would cost the owner of a \$200,000 home an additional \$5.66 per month (\$68 per year).

Call volumes have been steadily increasing (13% since 2011), and the Clarkston area continues to grow. Adequate facilities and working apparatus are necessary to save lives, but also to maintain the fire district’s insurance rating which impacts premiums paid by home and business owners. Chief Hardin says that the lid lift will provide the resources to meet the increased demand for emergency services.

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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.*