



Clallam County Fire District 3

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Clallam County Fire District 3 Shares Challenges to Service

SEQUIM, WASH. – Clallam County Fire District 3 is sharing information about the challenges it is facing to maintain emergency service levels. The fire district has experienced a 33 percent increase emergency call volumes in the past seven years. Emergency calls have tripled in the last 20 years. The challenge is in being able to respond an increased demand for service without adequate and sustainable revenue.

“We have an obligation to be open and transparent with our community about what we’re facing,” said Fire Chief Ben Andrews. “That’s why we are coming to the community now before service levels are impacted. We want to continue providing the quality service people have come to expect from our fire district.”

The fire district is dedicating all resources now to a “boots on the ground” response. This means that emergency personnel are so busy running calls that they have little time for training, commercial building walk throughs, or other tasks that are important to public safety.

Last year, it had to turn down a grant for additional firefighters because of how the matching funds requirement would impact the fire district financially. The fire district also is unable to set aside money for capital needs, such as replacing apparatus, improving facilities and investing in emergency equipment like heart monitors and air tanks.

Costs to provide service will exceed revenue in 2019 and start draining reserves to maintain current service levels. If this continues, the fire district will not have adequate reserves to fund staffing and other routine expenses soon after. This would necessitate significant service level and program cuts.

To restore funding for emergency services, the fire district is asking the community to consider a lid lift during the November 6 General Election to return the general levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Voters originally approved a general levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2004.

Since that time, the general levy has fallen to \$1.26. If approved, the 24-cent lid lift would be approximately an additional \$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 facility and apparatus needs.

The general levy rate is capped by law at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The ballot measure would allow the fire district to maintain its revenue stream for six years by either the statutory one percent or the Consumer Price Index for the region.

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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.