



CENTRAL KITSAP FIRE & RESCUE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue facing challenges to service

Additional staffing is needed to keep up with higher call volumes

[Silverdale, Wash.] – Calls for Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue have been on the rise – increasing 35 percent in the last five years. In 2022, the fire district responded to 11,062 calls, of which 67 percent were for emergency medical service (EMS).

Revenue, however, is not keeping up with the demand for and costs to provide emergency services.

“We want to be transparent with our community,” Fire Chief Jason Christian said. “We require additional emergency personnel to respond to higher call volumes and maintain the level and quality of our emergency response. We also need to replace apparatus to ensure service reliability when responding to calls.”

Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue (CKFR) provides fire and life safety services to 74,800 residents over 115 square miles. The district’s emergency personnel are highly trained to provide services for fire suppression and prevention, EMS, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, vehicle accidents and extrication, and fire and life safety education programs.

How emergency services are funded

The fire district’s daily operations are funded by a fire levy capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The fire levy funds emergency personnel, supplies, equipment, and apparatus. Voters approved a fire levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in 2019. Since then, the rate is projected to fall to \$1.34 in 2024.

Levy rates fall as property values rise. This is called “levy compression” and impacts the fire district’s ability to respond to higher call volumes. This is why, at times, we must ask voters to reset the fire levy to the previously approved amount of \$1.50, which is known as a “levy lid lift.”

CKFR is considering asking voters for a levy lid lift sometime in 2024 to fund the following projects:

- Up to six firefighters over six years. This will allow the fire district to staff two additional stations (Lake Symington and Olympic View) 24 hours a day and reduce response times districtwide.
- Replace an ambulance that has reached the end of its usable life
- Refurbish up to three engines, saving taxpayers up to \$2 million as opposed to buying new ones
- Improve firefighter and paramedic training programs



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- Fund the CARES program to reduce non-emergency calls to 911 and improve service for residents

Together, these improvements will reduce emergency response times and improve service reliability across the district.

CKFR is considering asking voters to reset the levy rate from \$1.34 to \$1.50. The \$0.16 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$500,000 home (considered average for the area) an additional \$80 per year or \$6.67 per month.

“We believe it is critical for our community to understand how we are funded and how we use your tax dollars to provide high quality emergency services,” Christian said. “We report to you and we hope you take part in this important conversation.”

Learn more at www.ckfr.org. Fire Chief Jason Christian also welcomes your questions at jchristian@ckfr.org and 360-447-3550.

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Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue provides fire and emergency medical services to 74,800 residents over 115 square miles. Last year, the fire district responded to 11,062 calls – of which 67 percent were EMS-related. Call volumes have increased 35 percent over the past five years. The district’s emergency personnel are highly trained to provide services for fire suppression and prevention, EMS, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, vehicle accidents and extrication, and fire and life safety education programs. CKFR operates under a balanced budget, maintains adequate emergency reserves, and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state. These strong financial practices have earned the district an AA+ rating from Standard and Poor’s, one of the highest possible credit rating.