



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 15, 2015
Contact: Mike Bucy, Fire Chief
Office (509) 262-9660 Cell (509) 953-3189 mbucy@scfpd1.com

Stevens County Fire District 1 prepares for wildland fire season
Asks property owners to create a “defensible space” around buildings

(Clayton, Wash.) – Stevens County Fire District 1 is preparing for a busy wildland fire season for most of the area it serves. The fire district is encouraging property owners in vulnerable areas to create a defensible space around buildings to be prepared in case a wildland fire should occur. The fire district, which serves 22,000 people over 375 square miles, is struggling to provide an adequate emergency response due to record high call volumes, a decline in volunteer firefighters and aging facilities.

“We have been communicating the challenges that we are facing at the moment,” said Fire Chief Mike Bucy. “People can help by taking time to learn more about how to work with us to protect their properties in case of a wildland fire.”

Community members can find information on wildland fire prevention and creating a defensible space on the fire district’s web site at www.scfpd1.com. Click on the tab “Prevention” and then go to “Prevention & Safety Links.”

Chief Bucy says that the fire district has a plan to improve its emergency response for area residents. The Board of Fire Commissioners will consider asking voters to approve a bond this fall to replace its two busiest fire stations in Loon Lake and Suncrest, which would reduce response times by an average of five minutes. The new stations would contain sleeping quarters, which enables firefighters to respond directly from the station as opposed to home or work which can take longer.

In addition to the bond, Fire Commissioners are considering a levy lid lift for operations to hire one full-time firefighter and better fund the fire district’s equipment replacement program. Another firefighter will provide some relief for existing volunteers and add one more person to day time shifts when call volumes are highest.

The estimated amount for the bond and levy lid lift would be 52.5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value or \$8.75 per month (\$105 per year) for the owner of a \$200,000 home. The Board plans to hold two meetings on June 1 and June 15 to take public input before voting whether to place the funding measures on the November 2015 General Election ballot.

Both meetings begin at 7:00 pm. The meeting on June 1 will take place at the Suncrest Station, 5990 Highway 291, Nine Mile Falls, WA 99026. The meeting on June 15 will take place at the Loon Lake Station at 4009 North Cedar Street, Loon Lake, WA 99148.

Stevens County Fire Protection District 1 provides structure and wildland fire protection, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, and emergency medical service for 13,500 people (22,000 during

the summer) over 375 square miles. The fire chief, seven full-time and 40 volunteer firefighter/emergency medical technicians (EMTs) respond to an average of 1,100 calls per year.

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STEVENS COUNTY Fire Protection District 1

4532 Railroad Avenue
PO Box 246
Clayton, WA 99110
(509) 262-9660
www.scfpd1.com