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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Snohomish County Fire Departments Launch Recruit Academy

Lake Stevens Fire is one of ten fire departments launching the Snohomish County Fire Training Academy on Monday.

The Snohomish County Fire Chiefs Association directed the development of the local academy as the county's growing hiring needs outpace available enrollment at the Washington State Training Academy in North Bend. The intensive 14-week academy will be based at South County Fire near Everett. Member agencies are: Arlington Fire Department, Everett Fire Department, Lake Stevens Fire, Marysville Fire District, Mukilteo Fire Department, North County Fire & EMS, Snohomish County Fire District 4, Snohomish County Fire District 7, Snohomish County Fire District 19 and South County Fire.

Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien commented, "I appreciate the great teamwork and collaboration across Snohomish County to develop what will be an excellent fire training academy that will prepare our firefighters to be safe and mission ready."

Twenty-seven recruits will train 40 hours a week learning skills to prepare for their first shift assignment at the fire station. Seven company officers will serve as mentors. Training will be provided by 45 instructors drawn from all 10 member agencies. Many have previous teaching experience at the Washington State Fire Training Academy. Instructors from Everett Community College Fire Science program will provide strength and conditioning to prepare the recruits for the physical demands of a career in the fire service. Other training will focus on the mental demands of the job including handling stress in emergency situations.

Providing a local recruit academy not only addresses the county's hiring needs, but offers other benefits as well:

- The local academy will include training in Snohomish County protocols not available at the state academy. This will greatly reduce or eliminate the need for post-academy training, allowing departments to put recruits to work at local fire stations more quickly.
- Multiple departments sharing local expertise breaks down borders so firefighters can work together more effectively on mutual aid incidents.
- Sharing instructors and curriculum reduces duplicated effort.
- Training locally allows recruits to go home to their families at night instead of spending 14 weeks at the state academy in North Bend.

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The costs for the initial year are equal to the expense of sending a recruit to the state academy. Participating fire departments are donating the use of apparatus and equipment. The academy is seeking a federal grant to pay for equipment needs going forward.

Fire departments are looking at other regional opportunities. The Snohomish County Training Consortium formed last year to explore ways to expand multi-jurisdictional training and work together across jurisdictional boundaries.

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