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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Strategic Planning Process Nears Completion
EMS identified as priority one; longer goal focuses on renovating facilities

LAKE STEVENS, WASH. – Lake Stevens Fire is approaching the end of a six-month strategic planning process to identify priorities for emergency service delivery in the community. Of primary importance is adequately funding its emergency medical service (EMS) program, which accounts for 76 percent of all emergencies in the fire district. Long-term, the fire district will focus on renovating facilities to meet the growing demand for service in the community.

"Call volumes are increasing and more growth is coming to the Lake Stevens area," said Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien. "It's critical that we be able to meet the demand for emergency services. A strategic plan identifies personnel, facility and apparatus needs, as well as revenue requirements to keep our community safe."

Fire and EMS calls have increased 35% in the past six years, but state law limits the fire district's ability to raise revenue through property taxes to 1% per year. It also doesn't help that the EMS levy has fallen from 50 cents to 32 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value since voters approved it in 1999.

The Board of Fire Commissioners for the fire district will be discussing whether to ask the Lake Stevens community to "lift the lid" on the EMS levy and return it to the previously voter-approved amount of 50 cents sometime in 2017. This will be a public process taking place sometime in late spring.

If approved by voters, the EMS lid lift would continue to fund Basic and Advanced Life Support with 14 full-time and part-time firefighters and paramedics responding 24 hours a day. In addition to emergency personnel, funding would be used to replace ambulances, maintain existing apparatus, continue to provide for training and certifications, medical equipment, and first aid supplies. The 18-cent lid lift would cost an additional \$54 per year (\$4.50 per month) for a property valued at \$300,000.

The strategic planning process involved multiple community, staff, and stakeholder engagement efforts throughout the fall and winter of 2016. A community survey also was developed and 642 responses were received.

"That's why I moved to the Lake Stevens community," said Chief O'Brien. "People care about the future of this community and get involved. I'm grateful for that."

Once completed, the Strategic Plan will be posted to the fire district's web site.

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LAKE STEVENS
FIRE

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Fire Commissioners:
Troy Elmore, Paul Gagnon, Jim Steinruck
Fire Chief Kevin K. O'Brien

1825 South Lake Stevens Road
Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Lake Stevens Fire provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 44,000 people over 42 square miles. During 2016 our highly-skilled firefighters and paramedics responded to more than 5,600 calls, 76 percent of which were for emergency medical services (EMS). Lake Stevens Fire is proud to be debt free, operate under a balanced budget and has a long history of passing independent audits by the state. More information about the fire district can be found at www.lsfire.org.



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