

Contact: Chief Kevin O'Brien  
Phone: Office (425) 212-3044 Cell (425) 249-6984  
Email: [kobrien@lsfire.org](mailto:kobrien@lsfire.org)

June 21, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Lake Stevens Fire Discusses Merger: What Does “Improved Efficiencies” Mean?**

LAKE STEVENS, WA – Lake Stevens Fire is sharing information about how merging with Snohomish County Fire District 7 would improve emergency services and be more cost-effective for taxpayers. The term used by many agencies is “improved efficiencies” – but what does that mean exactly?

“This means we can improve emergency services and be more cost-efficient long-term,” said Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien.

Improving emergency services is a significant selling point for most home and business owners. If voters approve the merger, there will be additional firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics available to respond to emergencies in both communities. The new fire district will be able to station personnel based on where the highest number of calls occur as opposed to service area boundaries. This improved response potential is important considering that Lake Stevens Fire has seen call volumes increase by 28 percent since 2013 due to growth and an aging population.

Merging with Fire District 7 also would provide additional personnel for specialized emergencies such as large disasters (like the Oso landslide), technical rescues and wildland fires. For example, Lake Stevens Fire has eight wildland fire specialists; that number would increase to 46 with the merger. Lake Stevens Fire has eight qualified rescue swimmers; there would be 34 with the merger. These numbers also would increase for technical rescues (such as ropes and confined spaces), EMS, and hazardous materials.

“We have some of the most highly-trained emergency service professionals in the region. It makes sense that we operate as one team to cut through red tape and build a better emergency response for the communities we serve,” said Chief O'Brien.

Improved efficiencies also mean being more cost-effective for taxpayers in the long-term. Voters in both Lake Stevens and Fire District 7 have approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. A merger would continue this fire levy rate, and reduce administrative and overhead costs by eliminating duplication of services for administration, IT departments, training, fire marshal, and fire prevention. It also allows for more efficient planning of high cost capital items, such as fire stations, fire engines, ambulances, and equipment.

The combined district would still have local stations, professional firefighters and elected representation on a Board of Fire Commissioners. The new fire district will continue to participate in Aquafest and other local events throughout the year, as well.

**LAKE STEVENS**  
**FIRE**

Phone: 425.334.3034  
Fax: 425.334.6981  
[www.lsfire.org](http://www.lsfire.org)

*“Touching Lives Today ~ Planning for Tomorrow”*

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

1825 South Lake Stevens Road  
Lake Stevens, WA 98258

More information about the merger can be found on the fire district's website at [www.lsfire.org](http://www.lsfire.org). Please feel free to contact Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien by phone 425.212.3044 or email [kobrien@lsfire.org](mailto:kobrien@lsfire.org) to schedule a meeting with your group. The fire district also will hold a meeting to answer questions about the merger at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 15 at the LSF Conference Center.

###

*Lake Stevens Fire provides fire suppression and emergency medical service (EMS) to 44,000 people over 42 square miles. Our highly-trained personnel respond to an average of 6,000 emergency calls each year. Our fire district is proud to be debt free, operates under a balanced budget and has a long history of passing its independent audits by the state. More information about the fire district can be found at [www.lsfire.org](http://www.lsfire.org).*



**LAKE STEVENS**  
**FIRE**

Phone: 425.334.3034  
Fax: 425.334.6981  
[www.lsfire.org](http://www.lsfire.org)

*"Touching Lives Today ~ Planning for Tomorrow"*

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

1825 South Lake Stevens Road  
Lake Stevens, WA 98258