



## Information for the Renewal of SKFR Fire and Emergency Medical Services Levy

SKFR has been challenged with operating costs gradually increasing at a rate greater than revenue in recent years. These last three years, SKFR made some difficult decisions that included reducing career staff by 12 firefighter/EMT's, closing 3 fire stations and modifying staff deployments. These efforts stabilized the district's current finances creating temporary efficiencies. This proposed levy renewal is the opportunity for SKFR to restore the taxation lid back to the allowable cap of \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed valuation (AV). It will generate the revenue needed to hire firefighters and re-staff two of the fire stations that were un-staffed in 2014.

***Ballots will be mailed out on July 12, 2017 and counted on August 1, 2017.***

This summer voters will be asked if South Kitsap Fire and Rescue (SKFR) can continue collecting a Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Fire/EMS) property tax at the rate of \$1.50/\$1000 of AV. This is not a new tax, but does reflect an increase to the rate currently in place (\$1.35); it restores the taxing lid back to the \$1.50 per \$1000 of AV allowed by state law. It is a continuation of an established tax that voters have renewed on a regular basis. This levy is the cornerstone of SKFR's tax funding for maintenance and operations of the fire district.

Much of this levy renewal (\$1.35) is the current Fire/EMS levy rate that the citizens are paying today. The estimated yearly increase to restore the levy back to \$1.50 for a median priced South Kitsap home would be about a \$3.50 per month or a \$42 per year change in Fire/EMS taxes.

SKFR's call volume has grown while our workforce has been reduced, leading to a lower level of service and increasing response times across the community. SKFR is a combination fire district serving South Kitsap with a workforce of 72 career and 50 volunteer firefighters, EMTs, paramedics and support staff.

The fire district receives no ongoing county, state or federal funding. The vast majority of the district's budget comes from two separate tax levies from local property taxes; this measure is one of the two.

### Response and Neighboring Agency's

SKFR is the largest and busiest fire agency on the Kitsap Peninsula (responding to the communities of Port Orchard, Gorst, Manchester, Southworth, Olalla, Burley, Glenwood and Sunnyslope) and operates with a staffing ratio of less than one firefighter per 1000 citizens. With the large jurisdiction and high call volume, operations are stretched thin each and every day with multiple 911 calls. Emergency responders are often already committed on previous calls which delays responses. With 9580 responses in 2016, that averages over 26 per day with the typical station out of service time being an hour and a half per call.

#### **South Kitsap Fire and Rescue**

**.95 Firefighters per 1000 citizens**

Population 75,018, area served 117 square miles, 9580 responses in 2016 with 72 Career staff

#### **Gig Harbor Fire and Medic One**

**1.7 Firefighters per 1000 citizens**

Population 45,403, area served 54 square miles, 5,547 responses in 2016 with 81 Career staff

#### **Bremerton Fire Department**

**1.28 Firefighters per 1000 citizens**

Population 40,500, area served 23 square miles, 8124 responses in 2016 with 52 Career staff

#### **Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue**

**1.17 Firefighters per 1000 citizens**

Population 70,000, area served 115 square miles, 7490 responses in 2016 with 82 Career staff

**For further detailed information, please call  
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