



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Fire Commissioners Passes Levy Lid Lift Resolution

Measure Will Be on November Ballot

Stanwood, Wash. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for North County Regional Fire Authority (North County Fire & EMS) unanimously approved a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the November General Election ballot. If approved by voters, the “lid lift” would return the fire levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Voters approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in 2008. Since that time, the fire levy has fallen to \$1.36. Levy rates fall as property values rise to limit the Fire Authority to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus a one percent increase allowed by law.

Fire Chief John Cermak says higher call volumes are driving the request. Call volumes have increased 37 percent in the past five years due to growth and an aging population.

The Fire Authority completed a Strategic Plan earlier this year to outline how it will respond to the increased demand for service. The plan calls for additional staffing to maintain response times and service levels. It also identifies key capital projects for the agency, such as apparatus that is needed to respond to calls.

“More calls mean added costs for personnel, fuel, apparatus maintenance -- everything,” said Fire Chief John Cermak. “We want to continue to provide a high level of service, but we’re struggling.”

If approved by voters, the 14-cent lid lift would last for six years and cost the owner of a \$350,000 home an additional \$49 per year (\$4.08 per month). Funding would be used to hire six emergency personnel and supporting apparatus to respond to higher call volumes.

The Fire Authority held two public hearings in June about the fire levy lid lift before the Board voted on the resolution. The fire levy lid lift will be on the November 6 General Election ballot, and the Fire Authority plans to hold additional public meetings closer to the election. More information also is available on the Fire Authority’s web site www.northcountyfireems.com.

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North County Regional Fire Authority, known as “North County Fire & EMS,” provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 25,000 people over 110 square miles, including the City of Stanwood. More than 70 emergency personnel respond to approximately 4,200 calls per year. North County Fire & EMS is debt-free, operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the State. More information about the Fire Authority can be found at www.northcountyfireems.com.