



600 NE 267th Ave.  
Camas, WA 98607  
360-834-4908  
[www.ecfr.us](http://www.ecfr.us)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: July 18, 2018  
Contact: Deputy Chief Mike Carnes (360) 834-4908 [mcarnes@ecfr.us](mailto:mcarnes@ecfr.us)

**East County Fire and Rescue Passes Fire Levy Lid Lift Resolution**

*Come Learn More at July 29 Annual Open House*

CAMAS, WASH. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for East County Fire and Rescue voted unanimously to place a Fire Levy lid lift on the November General Election ballot. If approved by voters, a “lid lift” allows fire districts to restore a levy rate for emergency services at an amount previously approved by voters.

Call volumes for the agency have increased 52 percent since 2007. Funding from the lid lift would be used to maintain daily operations and emergency service levels, improve firefighter training, and repair equipment and apparatus. These items also are necessary to maintain the community’s insurance rating, which affects the premiums paid by home and business owners.

The agency is allowed a one percent revenue increase per year by law. That amount is not keeping up with the cost of inflation which is currently 3-4 percent per year. However, some costs are higher than that.

For example, utility costs have increased 18 percent in a year for the fire district. The cost for health insurance for district employees has increased 9.3 percent. Training for emergency personnel is 29.5 percent higher than the previous year. Higher call volumes also contribute to the amount the fire district pays in increased costs for operations, such as overtime (34.7 percent higher) and fuel for apparatus (23.4 percent).

East County Fire and Rescue will hold its annual Open House for the community on Sunday, July 29 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at fire district headquarters, 600 NE 267<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Camas (98607). Information about the November ballot measure will be on hand, and Deputy Chief Mike Carnes will be available to answer questions. There also will be a sprinkler demonstration by the Fire Marshall, a bouncy house for kids, and an ice cream sundae bar (donated by our firefighters).

“I think people will prefer the ice cream sundae bar to talking about funding for emergency services, but I’ll be there,” said Chief Carnes laughingly. “Really, this is just a great event for bringing the community together.”

If approved by voters, the lid lift would return the Fire Levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The proposal would be on the November 6 General Election ballot and cost 21 cents per \$1,000 (or \$7.87 per month for the owner of a \$450,000 home).

Voters in East County Fire and Rescue originally approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2008. That levy rate has since fallen to \$1.29/\$1,000 in 2018. Emergency services are funded through two levies (one for fire and another for EMS) paid through property taxes. Over time, these levy rates fall as property values rise to limit the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year (plus a one percent increase as allowed by law).

More information about the lid lift can be found on the fire district’s web site at [www.ecfr.us](http://www.ecfr.us).

###

*East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) serves 10,000 people over 60 square miles in the unincorporated areas of Vancouver, Camas and Washougal. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. The level of service provided by ECFR has improved the community’s insurance rating, which reduced premiums for home and business owners. More information on East County Fire and Rescue can be found on its web site [www.ecfr.us](http://www.ecfr.us).*