

# The Pulse

Fall 2014

## Fire Districts Seek Additional Funding to Restore Lost Revenue, Maintain Critical Services



On this fall's general election ballot, the two north-end fire districts are asking voters to consider special property tax measures that will allow each district to maintain current levels of service. The measures, if approved, will help overcome the issues resulting from the persistent revenue shortfalls that began when property values plummeted in the recent recession.

Long before asking taxpayers for additional help, both districts took steps to cut costs. They have increased cooperative efforts in a wide range of areas, including this newsletter.

Administrative staff has been trimmed through sharing of personnel or by keeping positions vacant when employees leave the organizations. Capital purchases have been deferred or delayed. Supplies budgets have been slashed despite skyrocketing fuel prices. Employees have declined wage increases, and steps have been taken to control growth in benefits costs.

**Before asking the public, the districts made significant cuts**

Poulsbo Fire Department is proposing a bond issue that will fund critical facilities maintenance as well as vital equipment and vehicle replacement. With funds freed from capital needs, the department will also be able to restore some of the operational funding lost during the recession.

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue is asking voters to consider a special maintenance and operations levy to help restore funds lost during the recession and allow the district to replace aging equipment.

See inside for additional information about fire district funding and each agency's proposal.

## Fire District Funding 101

Fire districts receive no on-going funding from federal, state or county governments. As independent agencies governed by locally-elected fire commissioners, the majority of the districts' funding comes from local property taxes. User fees for ambulance transports and contracts-for-service are examples of fire districts' very limited range of non-tax revenue sources.

Under state law, fire districts are authorized to collect property taxes of up to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. With voter approval, agencies can levy up to \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in additional property taxes to provide emergency medical response. Still, the amount collected from either levy cannot exceed 101% of the highest amount collected on existing properties.

Under normal economic conditions, the total assessed valuation of the districts rises annually. Levy rates are adjusted downward to keep collections on existing properties within the 101% limitation. In the first year that a newly-built property comes on to the tax rolls, it is referred to as "new construction." Tax revenue on new construction isn't subject to the 101% limitation, and is calculated separately at the previous year's levy rate(s).

However, the recent recession caused property values to drop starting in 2009. As the districts' assessed valuations fell, levy rates increased to provide 101% of

**Continued on back page**

### **NORTH KITSAP** **FIRE & RESCUE**

26642 Miller Bay Rd NE Kingston, WA 98346  
(360)297-3619  
www.nkfr.org  
@nkfandr facebook/nkfire



911 NE Liberty Rd Poulsbo, WA 98370  
(360)779-3997  
www.poulsbofire.org  
@poulsbofire facebook/poulsbofire

### **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

**More on  
Upcoming Ballot Measures  
A System That Saves Lives:  
One Man's Story**

# Poulsbo Fire Department

## PROPOSITION NO. 1 Kitsap County Fire Protection District No. 18 Upgrade of Apparatus, Facilities and Fire and Life Safety Equipment Bonds - \$2,745,000

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Kitsap County Fire Protection District No. 18 adopted Resolution No. 14-05 concerning this proposition for bonds. This proposition would authorize the District to upgrade apparatus and fire and life safety equipment and make necessary capital improvements to the facilities of the District, to issue \$2,745,000 of general obligation bonds maturing within a maximum of five years, and to collect excess property taxes annually to repay the bonds, as provided in Resolution No. 14-05.

Passage of Proposition No. 1 will authorize Kitsap County Fire Protection District No. 18 (Poulsbo Fire) to borrow a total of \$2,745,000 by issuing general obligation bonds. The bonds would be repaid out of annual property tax levies over a period of 5 years. The bonds will pay for upgrading fire and life safety equipment and making necessary capital improvements to the facilities of the District.

Capital projects are expected to include the purchase of two upgraded fire engines, re-chassis and updating of three medic units, replacement of the roof at Station 71, the upgrade and repair of equipment and facilities and other acquisitions including bunker gear for firefighter safety.

The levy rate is estimated to be \$0.19 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, costing an additional \$19.00 per year or \$1.58 per month for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation. The levy rate will decrease if the district's total assessed property valuation increases.



## Quick Facts About Poulsbo Fire

**Service Area:** 54 square miles  
**Population Served:** 23,937 (2010 Census)  
**2014 Operating Budget:** \$6.99 million  
**2013 Total Calls:** 3,411  
**2013 Medical Calls:** 2,280 (67%)  
**Non-Response Employees:** 5  
**Response Employees:** 36  
**Volunteers:** 25  
**Fire Insurance Rating:** 4 within the City of Poulsbo, and 5 in other areas

**Station 71**  
911 NE Liberty Rd  
**Station 72**  
28882 Falkner Rd NE  
**Station 73**  
1863 NE Pacific Ave  
**Station 77**  
1305 NW Pioneer Hill Rd  
**Station 81**  
26642 Miller Bay Rd NE  
**Station 84**  
18533 Augusta Ave NE  
**Station 85**  
23260 South Kingston Rd NE  
**Station 87**  
35100 Little Boston Rd NE  
**Station 89**  
4911 Twin Spits Rd

## Learn More

**Call:** Poulsbo Fire at (360)779-3997

**E-Mail:** Fire Chief Jeff Griffin at  
jgriffin@poulsbofire.org

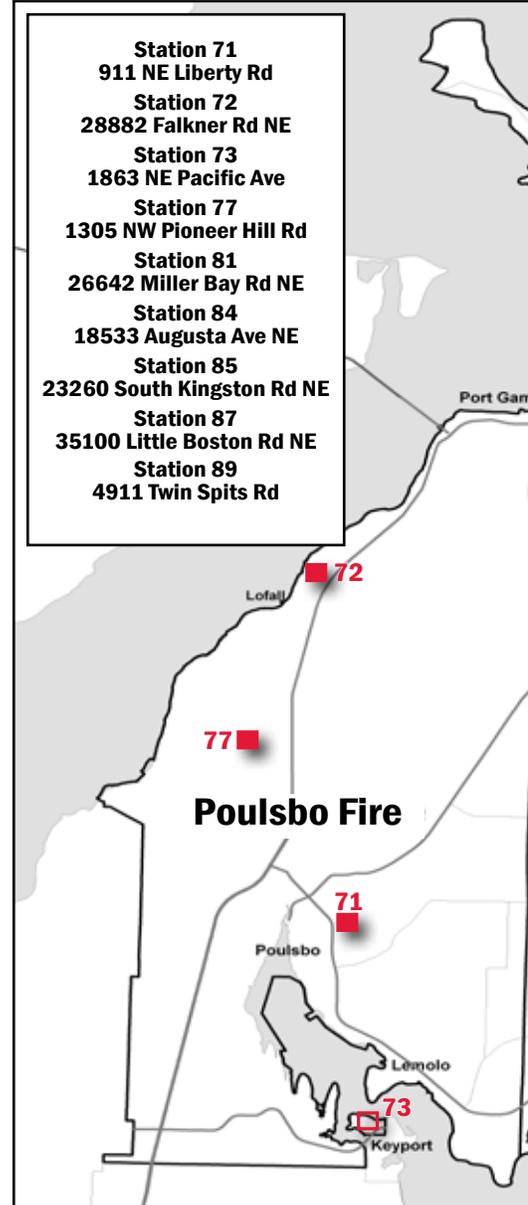
**Attend a BBQ/open house  
at the fire station:**

**Saturday, September 20**  
from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Station 77  
1305 NW Pioneer Hill Road

**Saturday, September 27**  
from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Station 73  
1863 NE Pacific Ave in Keyport

**Saturday, October 11**  
from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Station 72  
28882 Falkner Rd NE

**Saturday, October 18**  
from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Station 71  
911 NE Liberty Road



# North Kitsap Fire & Rescue

If approved by the voters, North Kitsap Fire & Rescue will be authorized to collect a maintenance and operations excess levy in the sum of \$600,000 for each year in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. This temporary four-year excess levy will be in addition to the District's regular fire and emergency medical services tax levies. The District estimates that the tax levy rate necessary to generate these funds each year will be approximately \$0.25 per thousand dollars of assessed property valuation. **The levy rate will decrease if the district's total assessed property valuation increases.**

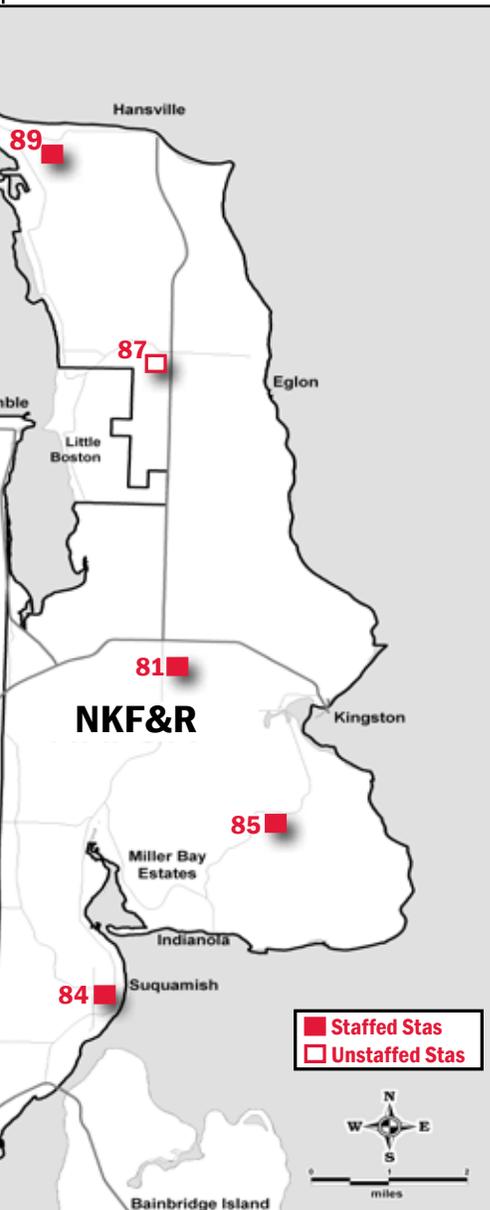
Since 2009, the District's total assessed property valuation has fallen by over 25%. As a result, the District's 2014 tax revenues are more than \$600,000 less than in 2009. The cost of providing fire prevention, fire suppression and emergency medical services continues

to rise. Although the economy is showing signs of recovery, these shortfalls will persist until assessed valuations increase substantially. Under these circumstances and despite having implemented many cost-cutting measures, the District will not be able to continue providing adequate staffing and service levels within the limitations of the District's regular tax levy. This maintenance and operations levy will provide the funds necessary to retain firefighters and maintain service levels.

If the levy is approved, **the additional tax per \$100,000 of assessed valuation is estimated to cost approximately \$25.00 per year or \$2.08 per month.**

**PROPOSITION NO. 1**  
**North Kitsap Fire & Rescue**  
**Levy of General Tax**  
**for Maintenance and Operations**

The Board of North Kitsap Fire & Rescue adopted Resolution 2014-08, concerning a proposition to adequately finance maintenance and operation costs. This proposition provides for the support of fire protection and emergency medical services, facilities, maintenance, staffing and operations by authorizing the District to levy excess taxes in the amount of \$600,000 per year for four consecutive years beginning in 2014 to be collected in each year following at an approximate levy rate of \$0.25 per thousand of assessed valuation (the actual rate will be based on assessed values).



## Level of Service

Seconds count in fire and medical emergencies. To get help to you and your family as quickly as possible, the fire districts make sure that there are at least 16 professional firefighter/EMTs on-duty in the north-end's staffed fire stations every day (shown with solid red squares on the map at lower left) responding in reliable and well-maintained vehicles. These forces are augmented by well-trained volunteers. Unstaffed stations are shown with red outlined squares on the map. All of these components are also necessary to maintain continued favorable fire insurance rates.

**North Kitsap Burn Ban**  
**Information Line**  
**(360)297-4888**

## Quick Facts About NKF&R

Service Area: 46 square miles  
 Population Served: 18,410 (2010 Census)  
 2014 Operating Budget: \$5.58 million  
 2013 Total Calls: 2,565  
 2013 Medical Calls: 1,707 (67%)  
 Non-Response Employees: 7  
 Response Employees: 38  
 Volunteers: 22  
 Fire Insurance Rating: 5

## Learn More

Call NKF&R at (360)297-3619

E-Mail to Fire Chief Dan Smith at [smith@nkfr.org](mailto:smith@nkfr.org)

Attend a BBQ/open house  
 at the fire station:

**Saturday, September 20**  
 from 2 - 6 p.m. at Station 89  
 4911 NE Twin Spits Rd. in Hansville

**Saturday, September 27**  
 from 2 - 6 p.m. at Station 84  
 18533 Augusta Ave. NE in Suquamish

**Wednesday, October 8**  
 from 4 - 8 p.m. at Station 85  
 23260 S. Kingston Rd.

**Saturday, October 11**  
 from 2 - 6 p.m. at Station 81  
 26642 Miller Bay Rd. NE near Kingston





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**Fire District Funding 101**  
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the previous year's tax revenue in an effort to meet rising expenses. Both districts reached their statutory lids for fire and emergency medical levies. With levy rates at their caps, when property values continued to decrease and there was very little new construction, both districts experienced

**Tax revenues can't recover fast enough to maintain levels of service without approval of additional funding**

annual decreases in tax revenues. In 2013, Poulsbo Fire Department's actual tax revenues were nearly \$800,000 (or more than 8%) less than in 2010. North Kitsap Fire & Rescue's tax revenues are

projected to be \$600,000 (or nearly 10%) less in 2014 than they were in 2009.

Assessed valuations are starting to climb again. But, due to statutory limitations as well as slow growth in new construction, the associated tax revenues can't recover quickly enough without additional voter-approved funding to preserve current levels of service.



# A System That Saves Lives: One Man's Story

The story of 53 year-old John Huntington's successful recovery from a massive heart attack clearly illustrates the importance of every element in Kitsap County's emergency medical system.

On a spring afternoon, the active and athletic Huntington had just returned from a visit to a climbing wall with his wife, daughter and son-in-law when he was struck by sudden and gripping pain in his left tricep. He discounted it as muscle strain until the sensation spread into his chest. Huntington then asked his wife to drive him to the hospital. This request was overruled by his wife and his nursing-student daughter who both insisted on a 911 call.

The call-receiver at Kitsap County Central Communications (CenCom) asked a quick series of questions that help personnel determine severity so they can send the proper resources. In this case, CenCom sent a paramedic unit which arrived at Huntington's home within 7 minutes of dispatch. Crews initially didn't find evidence of a heart problem but loaded the man into their ambulance anyway and headed to the hospital for a precautionary transport. However, just 200 feet down the driveway, Huntington started experiencing crushing and unbearable chest pain. The paramedic performed another quick assessment; this time, it was readily apparent that the man was suffering a potentially-lethal blockage of one or more coronary arteries. The crew turned on their lights



and sirens, and notified Harrison Medical Center so personnel there could prepare to deliver treatment as soon as the ambulance arrived. While the driver sped to the hospital, the paramedic provided Huntington with oxygen and medications to prevent the situation from getting worse.

In less than an hour after the onset of symptoms, Huntington's heart attack was stopped. He was wheeled into the Bremerton hospital's emergency room and, minutes later, physicians had inserted a catheter to remove a clot obstructing nearly 100% of an artery in Huntington's heart.

Most heart attacks result in irreversible damage. In Huntington's case, there was none. The firefighter-paramedic on the call has been treating patients for 34 years. He credits the entire system, noting that every element – early recognition of the problem, call to 911, emergency responders, ambulance transport with treatment enroute, and top-notch cardiac intervention and care at Harrison Medical Center – contributed to Huntington's positive outcome.

FIRE COMMISSIONERS	
North Kitsap Fire & Rescue	Poulsbo Fire Department
Wilson Stewart, Chairman (stewart@nkfr.org)	Conrad Green, Chairman (cgreen@poulsbofire.org)
Patrick Pearson (pearson@nkfr.org)	Darryl Milton (dmilton@poulsbofire.org)
Stephen Neupert (neupert@nkfr.org)	Martin Sullivan (msullivan@poulsbofire.org)
Gillian Gregory (gregory@nkfr.org)	David Ellingson (dellingson@poulsbofire.org)
Fernando "Espy" Espinosa (espinosa@nkfr.org)	Jim Ingalls (jingalls@poulsbofire.org)