

The Pulse

Fall 2018



PROPOSITION N^o.1

November ballot includes measure that, if approved, will ensure local fire districts get resources needed to maintain levels of service

As part of continued efforts to recover from the lingering effects of the economic downturn, officials at North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department have placed funding propositions on the November ballot. Each of the districts has selected a different type of measure according to the needs of each department and its community. In both cases, passage of the propositions is key to maintaining the districts' levels of service in Poulsbo and North Kitsap.

By state law, fire protection districts are limited in their revenue sources. Local departments receive between 80 - 85% of their funding through the property tax so when real estate values plummeted, so did fire district revenues. Between 2009 and 2014, Poulsbo Fire Department and North Kitsap Fire & Rescue collected \$6.1 million less in taxes than in a

normal economy. Although property values are now recovering, statutory caps on property tax increases prevent districts' revenues from recovering at the same rate. At the same time,

expenses have continued to climb at rates beyond the 1% cap.

To continue providing the same levels of service under these conditions, the districts implemented broad austerity measures that included wage freezes, vacant positions, deferral of apparatus replacement and postponement of capital projects necessary to protect the public's investment in the districts' facilities. Another

strategy has been the aggressive pursuit of grant opportunities. Both Poulsbo Fire Department and North Kitsap Fire & Rescue have been successful in their efforts, securing funding for a variety of projects including new fire-rescue apparatus, upgraded cardiac monitors/defibrillators and replacement of firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus.

While effective as interim solutions, these strategies aren't sustainable into the future. So the fire districts' leaders have developed the proposals for voters' consideration that are outlined in more detail inside. Questions about the measures as well as about the factors leading to the requests are welcome!

For information about tax exemptions and deferrals for seniors, the disabled, and low-income persons, see www.kitsapgov.com/assessor/ or contact your fire district.

The Pulse, published jointly at least once every year, is one of many cooperative efforts between your two local fire departments.

**NORTH KITSAP
FIRE & RESCUE**

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Poulsbo Fire Department

PROPOSITION NO. 1
Kitsap County Fire Protection District No. 18/
Poulsbo Fire Department
Regular Property Tax Levy Lid Lift for Fire
Protection and Emergency Medical Services

The Board of Commissioners of Kitsap County Fire Protection District No. 18 (Poulsbo Fire Department) adopted Resolution No. 18-05 proposing an increase in the fire district's regular property tax levy. To fund fire protection and emergency medical services for six years, this proposition would authorize a levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000.00 of assessed valuation for collection in 2019 and set the limit factor for each of the following five years at 100% plus the annual percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (as described in the Resolution), or 1%, whichever is greater. The final year's levy dollar amount would be used to compute limitations for subsequent levies.

On this fall's ballot, Kitsap County Fire District #18/Poulsbo Fire Department is asking voters to restore the regular fire



levy to the previously-authorized rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value (AV). With passage of this measure, future annual revenue increases will be limited to the consumer price index for the next six years. The fire levy is the department's primary source of funding and its restoration is necessary to maintain current levels of service in a manner that is sustainable.

Learn More
 Call: Poulsbo Fire at (360)779-3997
 E-Mail: Fire Chief Jim Gillard at jgillard@poulsbofire.org

The approved levy rate of of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of AV has fallen to \$1.35 per \$1,000 of AV in 2018 and is projected to fall even further. This is due to a state law that restricts annual tax revenue growth to 1%. As property values rise, the levy rate is reduced to fit within the 1% limitation. At the same time, costs continue to increase at rates well beyond 1% per year. This creates a sustainability issue when cost increases outpace funding despite continued efforts to improve efficiency and reduce expenditures.



This levy lid lift will help sustain the full staffing of three stations with at least nine firefighters ready to respond 24 hours a day. The measure will also help provide the resources to maintain on-going training that ensures quality response to both fire and medical incidents.

Using 2018 values the median home in the fire district would see a fire levy increase of \$51.00 per year or \$4.25 per month. The actual increase will be affected by changes in home values. It is projected that the median home value will increase to \$402,864 in 2019 so that same median home may see a fire levy increase of \$107 per year or \$8.91 per month.

Quick Facts About Poulsbo Fire

- Service Area: 54 square miles
- Population Served: 25,549 (2017 OFM Estimate)
- 2018 Operating Budget: \$8.3 million
- 2017 Total Calls: 3,941
- 2017 Medical Calls: 2,284 (58%)
- Support Employees: 6
- Response Employees: 42
- Volunteers: 16
- Fire Insurance Rating: 4

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 18 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.

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

Poulsbo Fire

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue's proposed maintenance and operations (M & O) levy would allow the district to collect an additional \$1.6 million in annual revenue for four years. The estimated 2019 tax rate would be about \$0.48 per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation. However, because two of the district's voter-approved measures are expiring and increasing assessed valuations are causing other levy rates to fall, it's estimated that approval of the new M&O will result in a total fire tax rate for most of the district's property owners that's about the same as the 2018 rate.



NKF&R's 1999 voter-approved bonds will be paid off at the end of 2018. Because the citizens served by the former Kitsap County Fire District #14 (Hansville/

Eglon) were not yet a part of NKF&R when the bonds were approved, properties there couldn't be levied for the bonds' repayment. The \$5.5 million issue funded construction and furnishing of the

Kingston headquarters and South Kingston satellite fire stations, a training tower and apparatus maintenance facility as well as the purchase of apparatus.

The district's 2014 voter-approved M&O levy also expires at the end of 2018. If approved, the proposed M&O levy rate will be the same on properties across the entire district (including on properties in Hansville, Cliffside and Eglon that previously couldn't be levied to repay the 1999 bond) but the effects on individual taxpayers will vary with property location as well as with increases or decreases to each property's assessed valuation.

If this M & O levy is approved, it is projected that the owners of a median home (estimated to be \$402,864 in 2019) in Hansville/ Cliffside/Eglon will pay \$10.65 additional per month. The owners of the same valued home in the rest of North Kitsap Fire & Rescue's service area will pay \$6.07 additional per month.

Interested parties are encouraged to

PROPOSITION NO. 1
North Kitsap Fire & Rescue
Four Year Excess Levy
for Maintenance and Operations

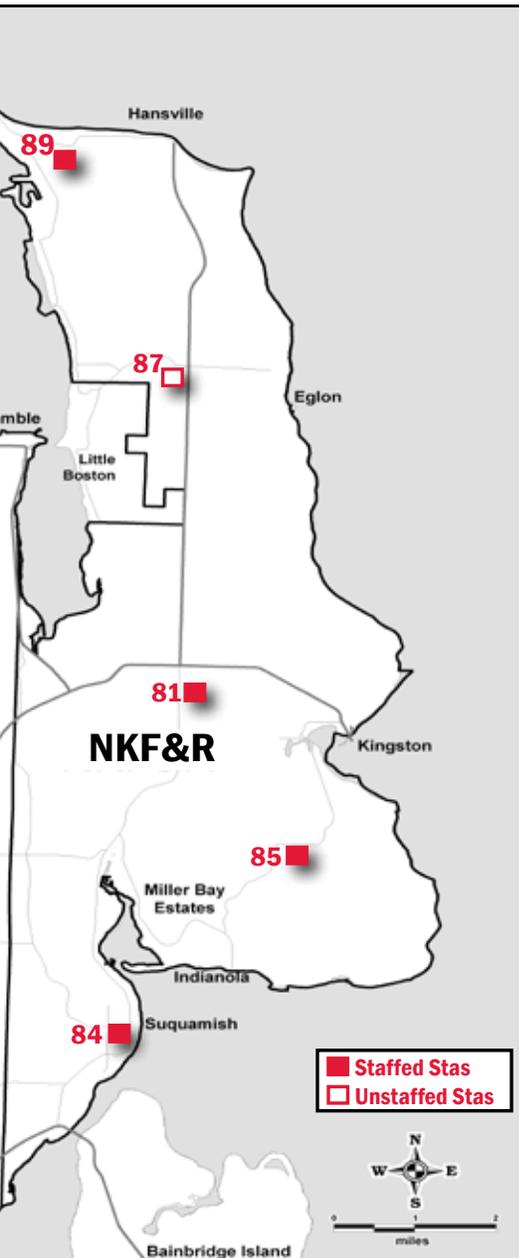
The Board of North Kitsap Fire & Rescue adopted Resolution 2018-06, concerning a proposition to adequately finance maintenance and operation costs. This proposition provides for the support of fire protection and emergency medical services, facilities, maintenance, staffing and operations by authorizing the District to levy excess taxes in the amount of \$1,619,592 per year for four consecutive years beginning in 2018 to be collected in each year following at an approximate levy rate of \$0.480361 per thousand of assessed valuation (the actual rate will be based on assessed values).

contact the district for information on impacts to their specific tax bill.

The majority of Proposition 1's funding will be applied toward \$3.9 million in capital projects that the district was forced to defer in an effort to maintain levels of service during the recession and its aftermath. Three ambulances, one water tender truck, one fire engine, several support vehicles and a long list of smaller capital items



are all slated for replacement over four years. Also planned are maintenance and improvements on the district's five fire stations, including HVAC and roof replacements as well as some remodeling that will increase available work and storage spaces in existing facilities. The remaining \$2.6 million (or \$650,000 per year for four years) will replace the funding that has been provided by the expiring maintenance and operations levy, ensuring that the district can continue its current levels of service.



Quick Facts About NKF&R

Service Area: 46 square miles

Population Served: 19,935 (2017 OFM Estimate-)

2018 Operating Budget: \$6.9 million

2017 Total Calls: 3,052

2017 Medical Calls: 1,953 (64%)

Support Employees: 7

Response Employees: 37

Volunteers: 18

Fire Insurance Rating: 5

Learn More

Call NKF&R at (360)297-3619

E-Mail to Fire Chief Dan Smith at smith@nkfr.org



reported to fire departments was 10 percent higher in 2016 than in 1980.

“These numbers show that while we’ve made significant progress in teaching people how to prevent fires from happening, there’s still much more work to do in terms of educating the public about how to protect themselves in the event of one,” said Lorraine Carli, NFFPA’s vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. “This is particularly critical given the increased speed at which today’s home fires grow and spread.”

Carli also notes that although people feel safest in their home, it is also the place people are at greatest risk to fire, with four out of five U.S. fire deaths occurring at home. That over-confidence contributes to a complacency toward home escape planning and practice.

“Working in the fire service for many years, we know that people often make choices in fire situations that jeopardize their safety or even

cost them their lives,” said Jim Gillard, Fire Chief at Poulsbo Fire Department. “We need to do a better job of teaching people about the potentially life-saving difference escape planning and practice can make



Today’s home fires burn faster than ever. In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Knowing how to use that time wisely takes planning and practice.

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department are teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFFPA) – the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week™ for more than 90 years – to promote this year’s Fire Prevention Month

campaign, “Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere™,” which works to educate the public about basic but essential ways to quickly and safely escape a home fire.

NFFPA statistics show that the number of U.S. home fires has been steadily declining over the past few decades. However, the death rate per 1000 home fires that are

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Information Line
(360)297-4888**

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and motivating them to action.” This year’s “Look. Listen. Learn.” campaign highlights three steps people can take to help quickly and safely escape a fire:

Look for places fire could start.
Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm.
Learn 2 ways out of every room.

Your fire departments stand ready to help you achieve these steps, knowing that the most effective way to fight fire isn’t with water; it’s with prevention and preparedness. Home fire safety surveys and smoke alarm installations are available by appointment. Both districts hold annual home fire escape planning contests through local schools in which classrooms compete for firefighter-sponsored ice cream parties by returning the highest percentage of accurately completed and practiced plans. Escape planning and home safety survey forms are available on the districts’ web sites: www.nkfr.org and www.poulsbofire.org

FIRE COMMISSIONERS	
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