

**CAMANO ISLAND FIRE AND RESCUE
ISLAND CO. FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 1
525 E. North Camano Drive
Camano Island, WA 98282**

For Immediate Release

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**CAMANO FIRE ANNOUNCES START OF
FACILITIES BOND PROJECTS**

Camano Island, WA – In May, 2007, Camano Island voters passed a \$10 million Capital Bond proposal, allowing the island’s fire district to begin long-needed improvements to the department’s buildings and fire protection capabilities. The Board of Commissioners decided to split the bond purchase into two phases, with \$5 million being sold in November, 2007, and the remainder to be sold in November, 2008. The Internal Revenue Service requires that all the bond money must be spent in a short period of time to avoid tax penalties. Splitting the bonds will allow more time to achieve all the construction goals.

Camano Island taxpayers will see a rate of 7.4 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value in 2008. That is about \$22.20 for a \$300,000 home. When the other \$5 million in bonds have been sold, the tax rate will be about 14.4 cents per thousand, or \$44 per \$300,000 home. The bonds will be paid off in 20 years.

A facilities study completed in 2004 clearly showed what needed to be done to change from all-volunteer fire stations with no sleeping quarters for career staff, inadequate room for modern fire apparatus, and dangers of seismic risk. Camano Island has experienced a huge growth in population, from 8,613 in 1996 to over 18,000 permanent residents today. There are now two elementary schools and a shopping center on what was formerly a mostly rural island. Calls for Emergency Services have increased from 819 in 1997 to 1744 in 2007. Housing paid firefighters 24 hours a day, at various locations on the island, is the only way to meet those increased demands.

With passage of the Bond, the District went through a selection process for obtaining a Project Manager and an Architect. A contract for service has been negotiated with Vic and Associates as the Project Manager. Designs Northwest, from Stanwood, has partnered with TCA, a very experienced, national, fire station architectural firm, to serve as the District’s architect.

An aggressive time-line has been set by the architects and the District to begin construction on a new fire station on West Camano Drive near Vista, replacing the old Madrona fire station. At the same time, a new water tank at the Mabana station will improve delivery of water for the entire South end of the island. And, a new water tanker (“tender”) will be ordered soon for that station. Remodeling and retrofitting of the Terry’s Corner and Country Club stations will be underway as well. These are the Tier One priority projects envisioned by the District as being most urgent.

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Future projects will eventually include a new station for Camano City, improved training facilities at Terry's Corner, Shop modifications and remodeling of the Mabana station. But those are "Tier-2" projects which, while needed, are most likely going to have to wait for future funding. Much depends on the continuing increases in construction costs and how far the bond dollars will stretch.

OPEN HOUSE – The District and the Architects will be hosting an open house at the Madrona Fire Station, 916 W. 5th Street, on Wednesday, February 27, 2008, from 6 P.M. to 9 P.M. All Camano Island residents are invited to attend and provide input, ideas and concerns about the new station and any of the other capital improvement projects. Meanwhile, if there are any questions, please contact the Administration Office at (360) 629-3008.

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