



# CAMANO ISLAND FIRE & RESCUE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 13, 2017  
Contact: Chief Michael Schick (360) 387-1512 [mschick@camanofire.com](mailto:mschick@camanofire.com)

### **Lid lift would fund service improvements for Camano Island Fire & Rescue** *Ballot measure planned for November*

CAMANO ISLAND, WA — The Camano Island community is being asked to consider a 25-cent fire levy lid lift for emergency services during the November General Election. If approved, funding would be used to hire emergency personnel, replace aging apparatus, and maintain District facilities. The lid lift would cost the owner of a \$350,000 home an additional \$7.29 per month (\$87.50 per year). The last time voters approved a fire levy increase was 13 years ago.

The Board of Fire Commissioners approved asking voters to consider a fire levy lid lift based on a 10-year Strategic Plan the Fire District developed late last year. Call volumes have jumped almost 29% in five years, and emergency response times have started to increase.

Funding from the lid lift would hire two firefighters to provide additional coverage during peak call times during the day. This would reduce response times and improve the Fire District's ability to respond to multiple emergencies that happen at the same time. CIFR currently relies on help from neighboring fire districts, which can take longer.

A portion of funding from the lid lift also would go toward apparatus replacement. The Fire District developed an apparatus replacement schedule as part of the Strategic Plan to make sure that fire engines, water tenders, and ambulances will be available and reliable for emergency calls. Even with an inhouse mechanic, apparatus becomes costly to repair as it ages and parts are hard to find. Having modern apparatus is important to community safety, as well as the Fire District's insurance rating, which is linked to how much home and business owners pay in premiums.

"We know the challenges facing our fire department to provide adequate service levels," said Fire Chief Michael Schick. "We have shared this information with our community extensively over the past year. Now, we will listen to see if these improvements are something our community wants."

The Fire District is limited to a one percent revenue increase per year by law, but the cost to provide service is often higher than that. More calls mean added costs for personnel, apparatus, maintenance, fuel, equipment, and other supplies.

In 2004, voters approved a fire levy of \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Since that time, the fire levy has fallen to \$1.10/\$1,000 as property values have risen. This provides the Fire District with roughly the same amount of revenue each year plus the one percent increase it is allowed. CIFR is asking voters to "lift the lid" of the fire levy to \$1.35/\$1,000, or 25-cents. The maximum a fire district can ask for by state law is \$1.50/\$1,000.

###

*Camano Island Fire and Rescue is an all-hazards response agency providing fire suppression, emergency medical service, technical and marine rescue to 20,000 people over 40 square miles. Fifty-three full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters respond to an average of 1,800 calls per year. For more information, contact Chief Michael Schick at [mschick@camanofire.com](mailto:mschick@camanofire.com) or (360) 387-1512.*