



Q & A ABOUT FUNDING ISSUE (March 2007)

Q: What are the funding challenges facing the Poulsbo Fire Department?

A: Over the past 20 years, since the passage of the last operations levy, the emergency call volume demand has nearly tripled. The demand for emergency services has increased faster than the revenues to pay for service. In addition, the Poulsbo Fire Department had the largest increase in emergency call volume out of all the fire districts in Kitsap County for 2006. Our funding has not kept pace with the rapid growth and demand on department resources.

Q: What determines Fire District Funding?

A: The fire department is primarily funded through a "regular property tax levy" and an "emergency medical service (EMS) levy." EMS levies are every six years, but operations levies are held as needed. The fire district levy authority limits the amount to \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed value. This authority is also restricted by state law, established in 2002, that limits property tax increases on existing property to no more than 1% more than the amount collected the previous year.

- In 1987 the Fire Department levy rate was \$1.50 per \$1000 dollars of assessed value.
- The 2007 Fire Department Property Tax Levy Rate is \$.88 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Q: Why doesn't the Fire Department have enough money to run the department?

A: In the past two years alone, the cost to provide service to our growing population has increased 36%, while revenues have only increased by 10%. In order to meet this demand, the department has utilized its reserve fund, but there are no longer any reserve monies.

Q: Why are quick response times so important?

A: There are over 2,000 new housing units in the approval process and that number is expected to continue growing. Simply put, when all units are already out on calls and when even more emergency calls come in, outlying fire districts must be relied upon to respond. This slows the response time, because the units are traveling from a longer distance. Brain damage can begin occurring within five to six minutes. When it is you or your loved ones, every second counts.

To learn more about the Poulsbo Fire Department, visit www.poulsbofire.org

Q: What has the Fire Department done to reduce costs and save money?

- Cost-saving Programs
 - Partner with other fire depart. to joint purchase management and liability insurance
 - Partnered to purchase a medical and dental plan for employees
 - Mutual aid
 - County-wide 911 dispatch service (CenCom)
 - Shared Record Management System
 - Joint Purchases
 - Standardize equipment and apparatus
 - Shared, county-wide EMS quality control system
 - Mutual aid with neighboring military bases
- Utilized Grants; two from FEMA, multiple grants from the tribe, and a grant from Depart. of Emergency Mgmt. (\$300,000+)
- Used reserve fund to maximum to delay asking for lift

Q: What is driving up the cost?

- A. Since 1987 the demands for services has increased three fold and the cost of living has increase significantly.
- Increasing cost of supplies including medical, maintenance, fuel and utilities.
 - Increasing cost of emergency apparatus and equipment
 - Increasing cost of personnel, including healthcare

Q: How are Department dollars spent?

- 72% Emergency Operations
- 15% Administration
- 4% Facilities/Vehicle Maintenance
- 3% Safety/Training
- 5% Prevention
- 1% Volunteer Program