

FIRE LEVY RESTORATION Q&A (Fire District 6)

QUESTION: Is this a new tax?

ANSWER:

No, this only restores the fire levy to the \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation previously approved by voters. This approval was authorized in 2009 to sustain our current quality and level of emergency services. State law only allows us to increase our budget by 1% per year plus new construction. This decreases the levy rate as the assessed valuation of the district increases. For 2020 the levy rate is \$1.34 per \$1,000.

QUESTION: What services are supported by the fire levy?

ANSWER:

The fire levy is the primary funding source for day to day operations of the fire district, which include fire suppression, vehicle accident rescue, medical aid, special rescue operations and fire prevention services.

QUESTION: How much will the levy restoration cost me?

ANSWER:

It will cost 16 cents per \$1,000 to a homeowner whose property value is \$350,000, which translates to \$56.00 a year or \$4.67 a month.

QUESTION: Why does the levy need to be restored?

ANSWER:

The district is challenged by the mainline railroad between Seattle and Portland, with an average of 80 trains a day bisecting the district at two crossings and blocking apparatus trying to respond to emergencies. Subsequently, we have to staff two stations in order to provide coverage on both sides of the tracks. The expenses of the fire district will exceed the revenues in 2021 and the years thereafter. East Olympia Fire District #6 will have to reduce its expenditures by reducing the hours both stations are staffed.

QUESTION: What other tax assessment does the fire district have?

ANSWER:

In 2016 voters approved a 6-year bond measure. The district has delivered on all elements of that bond. They included new fire engines, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), training facility, and IT upgrades. This bond will be paid off in 2022.

QUESTION: What's the difference between a levy and a bond?

ANSWER:

A **levy** pays for our daily operations cost, such as our employees, volunteer responders, heating fuel, training and vehicle services.

A **bond** pays for capital purchases such new fire engines, facilities, and equipment.