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S.E. Thurston Fire Authority updates Capital Facilities Plan
Ten-year plan outlines growing emergency response needs

YELM, Wash. – Southeast Thurston Fire Authority (SETFA) has updated its Capital Facilities Plan, a 10-year roadmap to guide fire station renovations and apparatus replacement as the community continues to grow.

Formed in 2012, SETFA serves more than 30,000 residents across 120 square miles, including the cities of Yelm and Rainier and surrounding rural areas. In 2024, the agency responded to more than 4,000 calls for service—a number that continues to climb.

At a meeting in mid-August, the SETFA Board of Fire Commissioners reviewed and discussed the plan, which, if implemented, would be the first major facilities update in 30 years. The plan prioritizes investments in fire stations and apparatus to improve the agency’s emergency response. Costs for these capital items are projected to exceed what can be funded by the operations levy. As a result, commissioners will need to consider additional funding options, such as a future bond measure.

“Planning for the future is one of the most important responsibilities we have as a fire authority,” said Fire Chief Mark King. “Our community is growing rapidly, and with that comes increased demand for emergency services. This plan helps us prepare for those needs while managing taxpayer dollars wisely and keeping financial transparency at the center of what we do.”

The Board of Fire Commissioners typically meets on the first Wednesday of each month, and meetings are open to the public both in person and virtually. Residents can learn more by visiting www.sethurstonfire.org.

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Southeast Thurston Fire Authority provides emergency response for fires and emergency medical service to 30,000 people over 120 square miles, including the cities of Yelm, Rainier and surrounding unincorporated areas. SETFA relies on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel to respond to more than 4,000 calls per year. Learn more at www.sethurstonfire.org.