FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 9, 2026

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SETFA offers public Q&A sessions on August 4 bond proposal
Residents are encouraged to learn more, ask questions before returning ballots

YELM, Wash.— As the Aug. 4 election approaches, Southeast Thurston Fire Authority is encouraging residents to attend one of two public Q&A sessions to learn more about the proposed bond and ask questions before returning their ballots.

Both sessions will be held at Station 21 at 709 Mill Rd. SE in Yelm. Residents may attend on Tuesday, July 21, at 6 p.m. or Saturday, July 25, at 9 a.m. Fire authority leadership will be available to explain the proposal, answer questions and provide additional information about the planned projects.

"Whether you already know about the bond or are just hearing about it, we encourage you to attend one of these sessions," Fire Chief Mark King said. "This is an opportunity to ask questions, hear directly from your fire authority and make an informed decision."

The proposed bond would fund renovations to four existing fire stations in Yelm, Rainier, Lake Lawrence and McIntosh while replacing three aging fire engines that have reached the end of their service lives. Planned improvements include new or expanded firefighter living quarters to support staffing now and in the future and upgraded diesel exhaust removal and decontamination systems that help protect firefighter health and safety.

Many of the fire authority's stations were built decades ago and no longer meet the needs of modern emergency response. Some lack room for today's larger apparatus, while others cannot support staffed crews because they were not designed with firefighter living facilities. Two stations—Lake Lawrence and McIntosh—cannot currently support staffed crews, requiring emergency units to respond from Yelm or Rainier increasing response times.

The proposal reflects a practical, cost-effective approach to managing taxpayer dollars, allowing the fire authority to address multiple capital needs for less than the cost of constructing a single new fire station.

If approved, the 25-year bond is projected to cost $0.20 per $1,000 of assessed property value, or about $100 per year for a home assessed at $500,000.

More information, including project details, answers to frequently asked questions, and an online calculator to determine individual costs, is available at sethurstonfire.org/bond.

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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 sethurstonfire.org.