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SETFA Board places capital facilities bond before voters
Measure would fund fire engine replacements and station renovations

YELM, Wash.— The Southeast Thurston Fire Authority (SETFA) Board of Fire Commissioners voted last week to place a capital facilities bond before voters to fund fire engine replacements and upgrades to several aging fire stations.

If approved by voters, the bond would fund the replacement of three aging fire engines and renovations at four existing fire stations in Yelm, Rainier, Lake Lawrence and McIntosh.

Several stations were built decades ago and designed for smaller vehicles and different operational needs. Major facility upgrades have not occurred in more than 30 years. Planned renovations would allow stations to accommodate modern fire engines and include safety upgrades such as diesel exhaust removal systems and improved decontamination areas to reduce firefighters' exposure to carcinogens.

Two stations are not currently staffed because aging facilities lack adequate space and firefighter living quarters. Renovations would allow those stations to support staffed crews in the future, helping reduce response times and strengthen emergency coverage across the district.

Three engines currently in service are more than two decades old. As fire engines age, maintenance costs increase, replacement parts become harder to find, and reliability can decline.

“People in our community rely on us to respond quickly when they call for help,” said Fire Chief Mark King. “Replacing aging engines and improving our stations helps firefighters respond safely and maintain dependable service as our community grows.”

The projects were identified through the fire authority's Capital Facilities Plan, which evaluates long-term facility and equipment needs. The bond is estimated to cost approximately \$0.20 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, or about \$8.33 per month for a \$500,000 home, which is considered average for the area.

Bond funds are legally restricted to capital purposes such as fire engines and fire stations and cannot be used for wages, staffing, or daily operating expenses.

Additional information about the proposal, including project details, frequently asked questions, and a calculator to estimate potential property tax 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 www.sethurstonfire.org.