



**Key Peninsula Fire Department**  
8911 Key Peninsula Highway KPN  
Lakebay, WA 98349  
(253) 884-2222  
www.keypeninsulafire.org



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 10, 2012  
CONTACT: Chief Tom Lique  
tlique@piercefir.org (253) 884-2222 Office (253) 255-4028 Cell



*Damage from fire at local residence.*

### **Another fire highlights response problems for Key Peninsula Fire Department** *Fire department proposes solution at May meeting*

The Key Peninsula Fire Department was dispatched at 11:10 a.m. to a fire at a local residence on 195<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Key Peninsula South). One fire fighter arrived at 11:22 a.m. to find smoke pouring from the eaves and fire visible from the living room. A fire engine with three fire fighters arrived at 11:24 a.m. to start suppression activities. Mutual aid was requested from neighboring fire districts and arrived at 11:43 a.m. No lives were lost, but one fire fighter was transported to a local area hospital for heat exhaustion and dehydration. Two family pets died in the blaze, and the home is considered a total loss.

The National Fire Protection Association says that fire districts with similar populations should be able to respond to a fire or emergency medical call within five minutes 90% of the time. Because of staffing shortages, the Key Peninsula Fire Department failed to meet this basic standard 85% of the time for fires and almost 92% of the time for medical calls in 2011.

This is the third fire in three weeks where the local fire department has struggled to provide an adequate emergency response. On Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, it took 25 minutes for enough emergency personnel to reach the scene and effectively extinguish the fire at the Old Glencove Hotel. On Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at

12:06 p.m., it took 16 minutes before enough personnel had arrived to effectively fight a barn fire, at which point the wooden structure was consumed.

“Three fires in three weeks and not enough fire fighters to put them out,” said Fire Chief Tom Lique. “That’s the reality – and we need to change it.”

The Key Peninsula Fire Department has the fifth highest property loss record for fires in Pierce County because of its lack of emergency personnel and long response times. The Board of Fire Commissioners is considering asking voters to approve a levy on the November election ballot to fund eight full-time fire fighter positions. The levy would cost the owner of a \$225,000 home an additional \$7.70 per month. Better response times are the key to saving lives and property, as well as reducing homeowner insurance premiums, medical and ambulance fees.

The Board of Fire Commissioners will hold a meeting May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Key Center Fire Station, 8911 Key Peninsula Highway North (KPN), in Lakebay. The public is encouraged to attend.

The Key Peninsula Fire Department serves 17,000 people over 65 square miles. For more information about the department, visit [www.keypeninsulafire.org](http://www.keypeninsulafire.org).

###