



**Key Peninsula Fire Department**  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 13, 2012  
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### **Key Peninsula Fire Board to vote on solution to improve emergency response** *Levy would fund eight full-time fire fighter positions in 2013*

The Key Peninsula Fire Department Board of Fire Commissioners will vote on a resolution to place a levy on the November ballot to fund eight full-time fire fighter positions at its June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The meeting begins at 6:00 pm at the Key Center Fire Station, 8911 Key Peninsula Highway North (KPN), in Lakebay. The public is encouraged to attend.

The levy is proposed to help the fire department improve its response times and ensure enough fire fighters are available for emergencies. Currently, the Key Peninsula Fire Department relies on volunteers and mutual aid, which can add 20 minutes or more to response times. Three fires in April and May highlighted the challenges facing the fire department to provide an adequate emergency response. While no lives were lost in the three fires, a fire fighter was hospitalized for heat exhaustion and dehydration, and two family pets perished.

“Our first concern is public safety,” said Fire Chief Tom Lique. “This levy would fund eight full-time fire fighter positions, and help us improve our emergency response for our community.”

The National Fire Protection Association says that fire districts the size of the Key Peninsula Fire Department should be able to respond to a fire or emergency medical call within five minutes 90% of the time. Because of staffing shortages, the department failed to meet this basic standard 85% of the time for fires and almost 92% of the time for medical calls in 2011. In addition, the Key Peninsula Fire Department has the fifth highest property loss record for fires in Pierce County because of its inability to provide an adequate response.

The Board of Fire Commissioners will consider a resolution asking voters to approve a four-year levy to provide a full-time response to fires, and reduce response times for medical calls. The levy would cost the owner of a \$225,000 home an additional \$ 7.70 per month (approximately 41 cents per \$1,000 based on 2012 assessed valuations) and raise \$800,000. All funds would pay for salaries, training, and safety equipment for eight fire fighter/EMTs positions– not for overhead or administration. Better response times are the key to saving lives and property, as well as reducing homeowner insurance premiums, medical and ambulance fees.

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).

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