



Lane Fire Authority

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire chief available to answer questions about merger

"We want to hear from you," says Chief Terry Ney

[Veneta, Ore.] Fire Chief Terry Ney is inviting questions about the proposed merger between Lane County Fire District 1 and Lane Rural Fire/Rescue. The measure will be on the November General Election ballot, and Fire Chief Terry Ney is concerned about the lack of questions from the community.

"The merger means we can provide better emergency services more cost-effectively," said Chief Terry Ney. "This is important for both communities and we want to hear from you!"

Chief Ney encourages community members to review the merger proposal on Lane Fire Authority's web site at www.lanefire.org/merger-information. Lane Fire Authority is the name both fire districts adopted in 2012 when they started working together to reduce costs and improve emergency services.

Since that time, the agencies have staffed one more fire station full-time, added an ambulance (with plans for another), and have additional emergency response units ready to serve both communities. These new emergency response capabilities improved the ISO rating for the fire districts, which means many home and business owners have benefitted from lower insurance premiums. Operating as one fire authority also has reduced costs for administrative overhead, training, equipment, fuel, and other supplies.

Voter approval would finalize the merger and reduce the bureaucracy and costs associated with running three organizations. Fire officials plan to use the additional savings from the merger to hire one more paramedic for the Veneta Station. This would staff an ambulance during peak call times for the first time from this location.

"We have been sharing information about the proposed merger for over a year," said Chief Ney. "We are concerned that our community isn't aware of the merger, or that our proposal will be buried in a contentious Presidential Election."

Chief Ney invites people to contact him directly with questions about the merger at (541) 935-2226 or terryney@lanefire.org.

If approved by voters, the new levy rate (based on 2016 assessed valuations) would be approximately \$2.04 per \$1,000 and take effect in July 1, 2017. This means that property owners in Lane Rural Fire/Rescue would see a tax decrease of 8-cents/\$1,000. Those in Lane County Fire District 1 would see a 5-cent/\$1,000 increase for improved service, which is roughly \$12 per year for the average homeowner.

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Lane Fire Authority provides fire, life safety and emergency medical services (EMS) to 36,000 residents over 276 square miles in the Willamette Valley. This new partnership is actually two fire districts – Lane County Fire District 1 and Lane Rural Fire/Rescue – operating under a special agreement since 2012 that saves money and improves emergency services for the community. Our career and volunteer emergency personnel respond to over 4,800 emergency calls per year, 81% of which are for EMS.



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