



For immediate release
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Snohomish County Fire District 7 Chief to Retire

Clearview, Wash. – After serving Snohomish County Fire District 7 for more than 32 years, Fire Chief Rick Eastman will retire at the end of April. Chief Eastman transformed Fire District 7 from a small, mostly volunteer district to a state-of-the-art emergency service provider. He began his career as the second full-time career Fire Chief for Fire District 7 on Feb. 12, 1979. At that time, the District operated with three full-time paid firefighters and a volunteer staff of 41 firefighters operating out of four fire stations.



Throughout the past 32 years, Fire District 7 has faced many challenges including a rapidly growing population and the need for more advanced services. Under the direction of Chief Eastman, Fire District 7 has expanded to include seven fire stations, all of which provide 24-hour fire and emergency medical services. In addition, Chief Eastman led the reconstruction of the original two fire stations. He also expanded the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division to include an advanced life support paramedic service.

After approving Chief Eastman's retirement, the Board directed him to appoint an Interim Chief. He recommended Assistant Chief Gary Meek to fill the position. The Board of Commissioners accepted the recommendation and discussed making this a two month appointment through the end of June 2011, until they have time to make a final decision.



Meek has over 34 years of experience in the fire service. He began his firefighting career in the Navy, serving for four years assigned to the U.S.S. Enterprise from 1975 through 1979. On May 1, 1980, Meek was hired by Fire District 7 under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). After completing the 18 month CETA program, he was hired by Fire District 7 as a full-time firefighter. He worked his way through the ranks with a promotion to Lieutenant in 1983, Battalion Chief in 1985, and came off the line to become a Deputy Chief in 1991. In 2000 he was promoted to Assistant Chief, where his primary responsibilities have been administrative services and fire prevention. Meek resides in Fire District 7 with his wife. They have four grown children and two grandchildren.