

# Graham Fire & Rescue Fire Protection District No. 21



## Special Election - Proposition No. 1 - Submitted by Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 21 REGULAR PROPERTY TAX LEVY FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

**Ballot Title:** Shall Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 21 be authorized to impose a regular property tax levy of up to fifty cents or less per \$1,000.00 of assessed valuation for each of six consecutive years, to continue providing emergency medical services which includes advanced life support (paramedic) care and transport services?

**Explanatory Statement:** The Board of Commissioners of Graham Fire unanimously passed a resolution requesting an election to authorize a levy of a property tax in an amount not to exceed fifty cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, each year for six (6) successive years. By resolution, **the Board has agreed to levy only thirty cents in 2003, up to forty cents in 2004 and up to fifty cents the remaining four years.** This levy would allow the Graham Medic One program to be self-supporting, thus allowing fire revenues to go for fire fighting needs. The District plans to hire nine additional firefighter/EMS responders, rebuild or replace aging fire engines and ambulances, and provide a portion of funding for fire stations on the East and West side of the fire district.

The regular property tax levy does not provide for an adequate level of emergency medical services and firefighting services. Approval of the EMS levy will allow two fully staffed ambulances (instead of one) to operate, beginning in 2003.

If this EMS levy is passed, Graham Fire would establish a membership program. **This program would allow taxpayers and residents exemption from payment of the uninsured portion of ambulance charges, as allowed by law.**

### Statement For:

#### **Medic One saves lives**

Graham Fire & Rescue Medic One (EMS) is the lifesaving team that responds to medical and trauma emergencies when you or your loved ones are sick or injured.

#### **Graham residents deserve equal protection**

Graham is one of two communities in Pierce County that does not have an EMS Levy. Citizens within the fire district (Graham, Thrift, Kapowsin, Gem Heights, Frederickson, Benston and Bethel/Green Acres) need the same level of care and protection afforded the citizens of other communities.

#### **When they lose, we lose**

When legislation cut tax dollars for Graham Fire & Rescue, services were cut. Without adequate funding fire stations and paramedic and firefighter positions will be lost. This is unacceptable at a time when more services are needed, not less.

#### **Support the Medic One service that helps you**

This EMS Levy will generate dedicated funds to restore staffing and community services to previous safety levels and will support a growing community with an increased number of emergency service calls. **Vote Yes EMS.**

*Committee Members Include: Walter Balmer, Jennifer Harrison, Roger Nye*

### Statement Against:

For ten years your fire department has attempted a "special tax". Their efforts have failed for one reason; the "special tax" simply was not needed. This tax is approximately **30% increase** for 6 years; they claim they will use the money to hire firefighters. One must ask, what will pay for these firefighters after 6 years? It is very poor judgment to use "special taxes" to pay for personnel. The fire departments last tax attempt stated a "no vote" means they cannot hire 5 firefighters and would have to stop service out of the south station. **The tax failed and not only did they have the money to hire 5 Firefighters and maintain service in the south station, they doubled the hiring and now offer service out of the south station to Eatonville, Ashford & Roy who do not pay taxes in Graham.** The problems are spending priorities not dollars.

*Committee Members Include: Don Crisman*

### Rebuttal of Statement Against:

Private ambulance abandoned South Pierce County in 1999. Partnerships with Eatonville, Ashford and Roy fire departments increased the level of EMS service in our community. **Without the partnership, the service to Graham would have been lost.**

**All fire departments use EMS Levy money specifically to pay for EMS equipment and paramedic/firefighters** – it's not a "special tax" to pay for personnel.

The fire department's first priority: **keep people healthy and safe** – not profits. Keep our services!

*Committee Members Include: Walter Balmer, Jennifer Harrison, Roger Nye*

### Rebuttal of Statement For:

**Threats of reduced services or loss of personnel**, did not work in the past and it will not work now. Graham Fire has a Boeing plant pouring hundreds of thousand of tax dollars into its budget, and simply does not need a "**special tax**". Taxpayers in Graham have defeated this same "**special tax**" for the past 10 years, and have seen increased services and personnel. **Vote No** on this unnecessary tax.

*Committee Members Include: Don Crisman*