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## FACT SHEET

### Fire Annexation Vote

#### When

April 22, 2008

#### Who is voting

There are three groups voting:

- Residents of the City of Sumner will vote on whether or not they would like to be fully annexed into Fire District 22, more commonly known as East Pierce Fire & Rescue, for fire and emergency medical service (EMS).
- Residents of Fire District 1 will vote on whether or not they would like to merge with Fire District 22.
- Residents of the current Fire District 22 will vote on whether or not they would like to annex the City of Sumner.

#### How and where people vote

This vote is being done in person and by mail, depending on how voters are registered to vote.

- The polling place for Sumner is Sumner Presbyterian Church, 1915 Washington St, Sumner, 98390.
- The polling place for Bonney Lake is Bonney Lake Elementary, 18715 80th St E Bonney Lake, 98391.
- Voters using absentee ballots must mail the ballot by April 22 or drop it at a polling place or Express booth.
- The Sumner Express booth is located at the Sumner Fred Meyer at 1201 Valley Avenue.
- The Bonney Lake Express booth is located at the Bonney Lake Fred Meyer at 20901 Highway 410.
- Additional voting locations are throughout Fire District 22. For a full list, go to the Pierce County Auditor's Office at [www.co.pierce.wa.us](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us).

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## **THE DECISION FOR SUMNER VOTERS**

### **What is being decided.**

Last year, the City of Sumner began receiving service from East Pierce through a ten-year contract. This annexation vote would formalize the contractual arrangement.

Specifically, this vote would mean two main changes: if fully annexed, Sumner residents would be voting members of East Pierce, which currently is not the case under the contract. The ability to vote gives Sumner residents a voice in topics such as setting the tax rate and electing Fire Commissioners. The second change is that instead of paying the EMS and fire taxes to the City and having the City pay East Pierce for services, residents would pay taxes directly to the East Pierce district.

### **The vote does not affect service.**

Whether or not this vote passes, citizens of Sumner will receive the same service from East Pierce Fire and Rescue. The only difference is in the governance: the vote determines whether Sumner receives service through the current contract situation or as a resident of the fire district.

### **The vote does not affect fire/EMS tax rate.**

If the vote passes and Sumner fully annexes into the East Pierce fire district, Sumner citizens would pay their fire and EMS taxes directly to East Pierce but not at a higher rate.

### **Background of consolidation**

Firefighting has changed over the years. Medical calls are now the more common need, and there is a demand for specialized equipment. Also, the Sumner community has simply grown.

Because of these changes, a few years ago the City of Sumner looked at what options were available to provide citizens with the best service. It became clear that the City couldn't afford on its own the same level of service available through partnership. The study showed that consolidation was the best option because of economies of scale.

Following the study, the City of Sumner gathered a group of citizens on an advisory committee, had a consultant review the options and looked at various potential partners. East Pierce fit best. In October 2006, the City Council decided to enter into a contract with East Pierce for fire and EMS service. That contract began in January 2007.

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**East Pierce service to Sumner.**

Since the contractual service began with East Pierce, Sumner citizens received such improved services as ambulance transportation with no out of pocket expense, more firefighters and equipment available and streamlined fire permit services--all at no additional cost. Plus, East Pierce still participates in the community at such events as the Daffodil, St. Patrick's Day and Santa parades as well as the Arts Festival and the Easter Egg Hunt.

**Partnership by the numbers.**

- The same selection of equipment is required, but as a stand-alone city, the cost would be borne by Sumner's 9,000 residents while as part of the district, the cost is shared by 70,000 residents.
- In 2006, as a city department, Sumner Fire had 120 mutual aid calls, which is assistance from neighboring departments. In 2007, as part of East Pierce, the Sumner Fire station had only 10 mutual aid calls, and those 10 calls had an average response time 3 minutes faster than the calls in 2006.
- As a city department, Sumner Fire had 3-4 firefighters on duty at the station. In 2007 with East Pierce, the Sumner Station has at least 5 firefighters at all times. The extra 1-2 firefighters means that both the engine and the medic unit can be fully staffed at all times.

**THE DECISION FOR FIRE DISTRICT 1 VOTERS**

For residents of Fire District 1, they are facing all the same decisions as Sumner voters. Historically, Fire District 1 received its service from the former Sumner Fire Department. When Sumner Fire contracted with East Pierce, Fire District 1 did as well.

The wording of the decision is slightly different, though, since Fire District 1 is already a fire district. Thus, it would be voting on whether or not to merge with East Pierce since two fire districts merge while a City would be annexed into a fire district.

**THE DECISION FOR EAST PIERCE VOTERS****What is being decided.**

East Pierce voters are deciding whether or not to formalize the current contractual agreements and annex Sumner.

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**What it means.**

As with Sumner citizens, the benefit to citizens already in East Pierce is expanding the fire district to share the cost of a full range of resources with more people. Instead of 61,000 people sharing the cost, it would be shared by 70,000 people. Although this is not quite the same economies of scale that Sumner residents are facing, it still makes a difference. Plus, having Sumner and Fire District 1 as part of the East Pierce district brings two key resources to the district.

1. The Sumner Fire Station is a strategically located station that serves many people. Having it formally part of East Pierce and within the East Pierce system gives many residents improved service, both within Sumner and the western portion of the current East Pierce district.
2. An aerial vehicle. Sumner had an aerial vehicle, or ladder truck, as a resource but rarely had enough staff in the station to operate both the regular engine and the ladder truck at any one time. The combination of more staffing through East Pierce and this important piece of equipment in Sumner makes the ladder truck much more available for all residents in Sumner and the current East Pierce district.

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