



## Lane Fire Authority

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Fire agencies pass annual audits**

*Fire authority credited with improving districts' financial health*

[Veneta, Ore.] –Lane County Fire District 1, Lane Rural Fire/Rescue and Lane Fire Authority passed their recent audits for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The audits are an annual requirement for all public agencies in Oregon.

This is a normal occurrence for all three fire agencies, and has happened as long as Fire Chief Terry Ney can remember. What is new, however, is that the independent auditor credited the financial health of the fire districts to efficiencies realized as a result of the partnership as Lane Fire Authority. Lane County Fire District 1 and Lane Rural Fire/Rescue have been operating under a special agreement as Lane Fire Authority since 2012 to reduce costs and improve emergency services.

Fire Chief Terry Ney says that the partnership is working, but it's not official until voters finalize the merger, which is likely to happen during the November 8, 2016 General Election. He's looking forward to that day because the current arrangement is too bureaucratic. The fire agencies must have three boards of directors, pass three budgets, and pay for three insurance policies and audits every year.

The three audits cost taxpayers almost \$20,000 this year. Once voters approve the merger, Lane Fire Authority will require just one, saving taxpayers a significant amount of cash.

An independent auditor reviewed the practices of the three fire agencies in several areas, including deposits of public funds with financial institutions; budgets legally required; insurance and fidelity bonds required by law; programs funded by outside sources; investment of surplus funds; and, public contracts and purchasing. In all three reports, the auditor said that the fire agencies complied with state law for accounting practices of public agencies.

It also was noted that the three fire agencies had adequate reserve accounts. Lane Rural Fire/Rescue and Lane Fire Authority had no long-term debt. Lane County Fire District 1 is paying off a loan it acquired to purchase emergency apparatus.

"We are stronger working together as Lane Fire Authority," said Fire Chief Terry Ney. "Improving emergency services and reducing costs – it's a win-win for our community."

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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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