



# Snohomish County FIRE DISTRICT 7

*Earning Trust Through Action*

For Immediate Release

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## **Beloved Fire Chief retires after 44 years in the Fire Service**

[Monroe, WA] – After 44 years in the Fire Service, Fire Chief Gary Meek is announcing his retirement. Meek, who has served as the Fire Chief for Snohomish County Fire District 7 for the last nine years, will serve his final day on Wednesday, January 15, 2020.

“It has been an honor being trusted to serve the citizens of Fire District 7,” says Fire Chief Gary Meek. “They have supported us in developing one of the most advanced fire service delivery systems in Snohomish County making our community a safe place to live, work, and play in.”



Meek’s firefighting career started in the United States Navy aboard the USS Enterprise as a Hull Maintenance Technician as a member of the ships company fire department in Damage Control Division. In 1980, after serving 4 years in the Navy, he returned home and had the privilege of being hired as a firefighter by Snohomish County Fire District 7 through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program. Following this program, Meek was offered a full-time firefighter position with Fire District 7.

During his career, Meek served the citizens of Fire District 7 in many capacities. He worked his way through the ranks serving as Firefighter/EMT, Lieutenant, Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal working on code enforcement and public education, and then Assistant Chief of Administration. As the Assistant Chief of Administration he was in charge of the district’s Volunteer/Resident program, Finance, and Human Resource. He was appointed to serve as the Fire Chief by the Board of Fire Commissioners in April of 2011.

As the Chief, Meek led the department in developing a Strategic Plan to provide a long range vision and direction for the Fire District. He also implemented a Standard of Cover, which utilizes historical and predictive data for station locations and to ensure efficient deployment of equipment and personnel in order to meet the performance standards established by the district. Utilizing this information, Fire District 7 was able to reduce its operating costs by over \$2 million dollars per year.

Even before he became Fire Chief, Meek had a vision of regionalization for the fire service. His focus was on breaking down fire district boundaries and working collaboratively with other fire agencies in order to provide the highest level of service to the citizens. Throughout his tenure as Fire Chief he has led the district through two successful mergers; Monroe Fire District 3 in 2016, and Lake Stevens Fire effective

on January 1, 2020. Meek has also been a strong proponent of the Snohomish County Regional Training Academy which works toward standardized firefighter training throughout the county.

“I believe that through merging fire departments and combining training programs we will provide a higher level of service to the citizens and improve firefighter safety.”

As Chief Meek retires, Fire Chief Kevin O’Brien from Lake Stevens Fire will take over as the Chief of Snohomish County Fire District 7.

“Through our merger with Monroe Fire, it has been an honor to serve as the Fire Chief in the community I grew up in. I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve with the best people in the industry. I will miss them, but I am excited to spend more time with family and friends in retirement.”

A retirement flag lowering ceremony will be held on January 15, 2020 at Fire Station 71 – 8010 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Snohomish WA 98296. The ceremony will begin at 8:00 am.

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*Snohomish County Fire District 7 provides fire and life safety services to over 118,500 people over 98.5 square miles in central and east Snohomish County, including the communities of Clearview, Maltby, Mill Creek and Monroe. In 2018 our emergency personnel responded to more than 11,000 emergency calls. Through taxpayer support, Fire District 7 has built one of the most advanced emergency response systems in Snohomish County with highly-trained personnel, facilities, apparatus, and rescue programs. We appreciate your support and are grateful for the opportunity to serve our community.*

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