

TRI-LAKES MONUMENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Christopher Truty, Fire Chief

May 3, 2017

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Community Members:

As a respected stakeholder in our community, we are seeking your input on a proposal to address your fire district's highest priority operating, equipment and facility needs.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) has worked hard to be prudent with taxpayer dollars, including deferring critical facility maintenance projects, putting on hold the replacement of outdated firefighting and EMS equipment, and instituting pay freezes.

Unfortunately, our efforts to reduce expenses—coupled with state and federal grants—have not been enough to adequately and continuously balance our budget. Rising costs, increasing call volume, and other factors have required us to continue to rely on emergency reserves. However, this funding strategy is no longer an option. The District's reserves have dropped below \$200,000, which is barely above our required minimum.

To maintain emergency services—including protecting response times—TLMFPD is considering placing a mill levy on the November 2017 ballot. Proceeds of the mill levy would be used to address the following needs:

- Attracting and retaining experienced emergency responders, and mitigating costly turnover rates
- Strategically adding EMS, training and inspector personnel to maintain emergency services
- Replacing outdated, unreliable front-line emergency response vehicles, apparatus and equipment to better protect residents, businesses and emergency responders
- Replacing obsolete front-line communications equipment and upgrading 911 notification services
- Addressing critical health/life safety issues, providing sufficient working space for first responders, improving energy efficiency and extending the useful life of existing fire stations

The estimated tax impact of the proposed mill levy increase of 6.9 mills is \$3.41 per month per \$100,000 of a home's actual value, as determined by the County Assessor, or about \$40.92 per year.

Since 2013, TLMFPD has lost 25 percent its firefighters to other fire districts. These were first responders with a combined 100 years of experience.

TLMFPD is losing some of its most experienced first responders to other fire districts with better pay, benefits and training opportunities. This repeated turnover and associated costs and losses is not sustainable.

A growing, aging population is driving up emergency call volume.

In all, our first responders protect a 52-square-mile area that includes 33,000 residents and more than 400 businesses. Within the next five years, our service area population is projected to increase to 40,000. In addition to growing in number, our population is also aging. These two factors are increasing emergency call volume, which will become even higher as projects like long-term care facilities in Monument come on line. Current staffing is regularly strained due to the community's increasing demand for emergency services.

Aging emergency response vehicles and equipment need to be replaced.

Most fire districts have vehicle- and equipment-replacement programs in place. Unfortunately, given our funding challenges, TLMFPD has never been able to implement these types of programs. Consequently, the Fire District's air packs, Jaws of Life, heart monitors, communications equipment and mobile data computers are outdated and in need of replacement. Front-line emergency response vehicles and apparatus have also reached, or are approaching, the end of their reliable life.

Our fire stations look good on the outside, but are hurting on the inside.

TLMFPD's three fire stations are plagued by many health/life safety, operational and energy inefficiency issues. While they may appear to be in good condition, there is much that needs to be addressed. The stations were not designed to handle the contemporary work requirements of the first responders and equipment that is needed to serve 33,000 residents.

Wildfire risk is on the rise.

Insufficient mitigation practices, as well as a growing wildland urban interface (where homes meet nature), are increasing wildfire risk in our service area. It's not a matter of "if" but "when" a wildfire will strike. We need to be prepared.

Your input is critical.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you one-on-one to discuss TLMFPD's mill levy proposal. If you would like a representative of the Fire District to make a presentation to your civic, business or other organization, we would welcome that opportunity as well. Please call (719) 484-0911 if you would like to set up a meeting or presentation.

TLMFPD will be hosting two community information meetings and tours at Fire Station 1, located at 18650 CO-105, Monument, CO 80132:

- Wednesday, May 17, 6:30-7:30 PM
- Saturday, May 20, 9:30-10:30 AM

Thank you in advance for your thoughts and recommendations on this important proposal.

Sincerely,

TRI-LAKES MONUMENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



Jake Shirk
Board President



Chris Truty
Fire Chief