

TRI-LAKES MONUMENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Christopher Truty, Fire Chief

May 5, 2017

Dear Residents:

Imagine if your fire district lost 25 percent of its firefighters—including some of its most experienced first responders—to neighboring fire districts.

That's exactly what has happened at Tri-Lake Monument Fire Protection District over the past four years. These were professionals with collectively more than 100 years of experience.

Unfortunately, employee turnover is just one of many challenges that our district faces.

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 does not meet 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the Fire District's air packs, Jaws of Life, heart monitors, communications equipment and mobile data computers are outdated and in need of replacement.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 number of first responders and equipment that is needed to serve 33,000 residents, let alone 40,000.

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.

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, or about \$40.92 per year. And for homeowners who qualify for the Senior Property Tax Exemption, the tax impact would be even less.

Your input is critical. This is your fire district and you have the final word.

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

The Fire District will also be conducting a public opinion mail survey in the next few weeks. Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Nothing is set in stone until we hear from you, our taxpayers. Additional information regarding the District's operating, equipment and facility needs, and mill levy proposal, is available on our website at www.tlmfire.org.

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