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Vince Stafford, Fire Chief

MOLALLA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REFERS LEVY RENEWAL TO THE VOTERS

March 29, 2023

The Molalla Rural Fire Protection District's Board of Directors have unanimously agreed to refer a measure to renew the District's current local option levy on the May 16, 2023 primary ballot. It would renew the local option levy voters approved in 2018.

According to Board President Mike Towner, the levy renewal would help maintain the District's ability to be able to handle multiple emergency calls at the same time. "Currently about half of our calls occur when one crew is already out on another emergency. The levy renewal would help ensure we are able to continue to respond to both calls in these situations. Otherwise, some residents may have to wait for 15 minutes or more for help to arrive from a nearby fire district."

In addition to fire and emergency medical response throughout the 101 square miles of the District, Molalla Fire is also responsible for ambulance service to a 350 square mile area that includes portions of neighboring fire districts and unprotected wilderness area. Transporting patients can take two to three hours. The levy renewal would help ensure a second crew is available when one crew is involved in transporting a patient.

In addition to support for the District's ability to handle overlapping calls for medical or fire emergencies, the levy renewal would also help ensure the District's medical response teams have at least one paramedic with Advanced Life Support (ALS) training. "Paramedics with ALS training have the ability to provide more advanced levels of emergency assistance compared to those with Basic Life Support (BLS) training," explained Molalla Chief Vince Stafford. "Funds from the levy would be used to retain seven paramedic/firefighters with ALS skills."

The levy renewal tax rate would be 76¢ per \$1,000 of *assessed* (not market) value, the same as the current levy rate. Cost of the levy renewal for a home valued at \$214,000, about average for the District, would be approximately \$163 per year, or \$14 per month.

The local option levy is an important part of Molalla Fire District's budget. If the levy is not approved, the District would need to lay off 7 of the District's 15 paid paramedic/firefighters after the current levy expires. This would result in delays in emergency response and ambulance transport to area hospitals for residents as the District would need to increase its reliance on backup support from neighboring fire districts when there are multiple calls for service at the same time.

***For more information on Molalla Fire District or the levy renewal, contact
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