

News Release

Louisville Fire Protection District seeks funding after nearly 30 years

March 1, 2006 — After 28 years of providing quality fire and emergency services with no tax increase, the Louisville Fire Protection District will ask voters to support a 3.5 mill levy election this spring.

“The district has worked hard to keep its operating costs low, and we are proud that we will not have any capital debt after this year,” said Dave Yost, district president. “Unfortunately, our current funding can no longer support the department’s current and future mission requirements.”

The district protects 17 square miles of property and approximately 23,000 residents of the city of Louisville and parts of unincorporated Boulder County. Since 1990, the number of residents served by the district has grown 76 percent. Call volume has soared from 586 emergencies in 1991 to 1,338 in 2005.

Passage of the mill levy would allow the fire district to run its own ambulance service.

Responding to Louisville calls is no longer profitable for private ambulance services, which must cover larger areas to recoup their per-call expenses. The result is longer response times in Louisville, Yost said.

“After completing an extensive comprehensive plan of the district’s needs, it has become very evident that (the fire department) should be providing ambulance service to the community,” he said.

Board member Chris Schmidt agrees.

“The district has used non-profit, for-profit and fire-based ambulance services in the past 15 years, and we strongly believe that bringing this function back into the fire department only makes sense,” Schmidt said. “Our citizens deserve a quick and predictable level of service.”

The fire department’s operating costs have skyrocketed, despite effective fiscal management by the board and administrative team, said Chief Tim Parker.

Although the department is predominately volunteer, it would face significant financial challenges without passage of the mill levy, Parker said.

The district’s comprehensive plan indicates a need to modify its downtown fire station to house firefighters round the clock. The department has been using reserve funds for several years to purchase fire trucks and major equipment and has no way to replenish those funds without additional tax revenues, Parker said.

Fire district voters should receive their ballots on or about April 17, and they must be returned by May 2.

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