



Yakima County Fire Protection District No. 5

SERVING 700 SQUARE MILES

TODD LUNNING
CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

ERNEST W. GASSELING - DAVID R. CHARVET
BOARD MEMBERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 21, 2023
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Bond would pay for capital projects to improve emergency response

Fire District 5 reports revenue is not keeping up with demand for service

Zillah, Wash. – Yakima County Fire District 5 has identified facility improvements needed to respond to the higher demand for emergency services. The Fire District is asking voters to fund these projects through a bond that will appear on the November 7 general election ballot.

The purpose of the bond is to renovate stations and fund essential equipment to improve the Fire District's emergency response. The Fire District's call volumes have increased by 22 percent since 2015 and revenue is not able to fund facilities and equipment.

"We have identified a number of deficiencies at our fire stations that need to be addressed," Fire Chief Ken Shipman said. "For example, we don't have enough sleeping quarters for firefighters to respond, which would allow for faster response times. Our facilities lack modern decontamination areas for equipment that has been exposed to carcinogens or hazardous medical by-products. Our facilities also lack showers for firefighters to wash themselves after being exposed to those same hazardous materials. We need adequate facilities to recruit, retain and protect the health and safety of our emergency personnel."

If approved by voters, the bond will fund the renovation of Station 3 in Harrah, Station 5 in Parker and Station 10 in Zillah, and build and equip a headquarters station with a larger emergency dispatch center. The bond will also fund emergency apparatus that has reached the end of its useful life.

Yakima County Fire District 5 is the largest fire district in the state geographically and responds to an average of 2,700 calls per year and is under regular threat from wildland fires in both populated and unpopulated areas. Since its formation in 1947, it has never asked for a tax increase. This is no longer an option because it can no longer fund its capital needs through its fire levy.

The bond is projected at \$0.28 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. It would cost the owner of a \$300,000 piece of property (considered average) \$84 a year or \$7 a month.

Learn more about Fire District 5's funding requests at www.ycfd5.org.

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Yakima County Fire District 5 provides fire suppression, prevention, emergency medical service and a wildland fire response to 36,000 people over 800 square miles from. District 5 is proud to be a "combination department" relying on volunteers, part-time and full-time emergency personnel to respond to calls. Visit www.ycfd5.org to learn more about the fire district. We also welcome volunteer applications online or by contacting our main office at (509) 829-5111.