

Measure Explanatory Statement

Our Fire District covers 165 square miles spanning parts of Clatsop and Columbia counties. Our primary mission is to provide exceptional services and innovative programs that serve our community while still maintaining our fiscal responsibility. Currently, our Fire District provides advanced life support EMS and Fire & Rescue services, along with animal technical rescue, wilderness search and rescue, Community Paramedicine services, Public Health services and vaccination clinics.

While it has been a long-standing goal to not ask our citizens for additional funding beyond the initial imposed tax rate; however, with the 161% increase in call volume over the last two years, it has become necessary to seek additional monies to keep up with the service demand.

Our total current tax rate (\$2.0875 per \$1,000) is on average 26.5% below other fire districts in the county compared with their permanent rates plus their additional levies. Combining the permanent tax rate with a 5-year local option levy will provide the level of funding needed to support and respond to the increasing numbers of calls for service.

A review of the last three years of data in the areas of emergency response; non-emergency response; facilities, apparatus, and equipment maintenance; Fire, EMS, and Rescue supplies; utility expenses; staff wages and salaries; supporting volunteer assets in Fire, EMS, and Rescue divisions (certified, qualified, and *In Good Standing* personnel) shows that to stay on course with our Strategic Plan and meet the increasing needs of the community, the Fire District should (1) increase its current staffing level and (2) increase funds available to support the replacement of Fire and EMS equipment, apparatus, and other tangible property in support the increased call volume.

A "YES" vote would allow Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District to impose a local option tax of \$1.10 per \$1000 of assessed property value. Since the average assessed home value in the Fire District is \$300,000, the average homeowner would pay an additional \$330 per year towards emergency services.

The tax revenue from this measure would (1) provide the necessary funding for two full time equivalent Firefighter/EMTs at an estimated cost of \$183,000 per year; (2) allow the Fire District to retain existing staffing with competitive salary and benefit packages; and (3) support current and ongoing emergency services, the replacement of equipment and supplies, and the maintenance of Fire District buildings, properties, and apparatus.

The requested rate will raise approximately \$386,000 in fiscal year 2024-2025, \$416,000 in fiscal year 2025-2026, \$449,000 in fiscal year 2026-2027, \$484,000 in fiscal year 2027-2028, and \$522,000 in fiscal year 2028-2029 for a total of \$2,257,000. The estimated tax cost for this measure is an estimate only based upon the best information available from the County Assessor at the time of the estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression, and the collection rate.