

COLUMBIA COUNTY
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR COUNTY VOTERS' PAMPHLET

Ballot Title Caption: Five year local option levy for fire operations

Measure Number (if known):

Word Total (500 Max): 488

Statement

The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District currently operates under a voter-approved local option levy of \$1.24 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This measure asks voters to replace the existing levy with a new levy of \$2.02 per \$1,000 of assessed value, an increase of \$0.78 per \$1,000. If approved, the current levy would be retired and replaced by the new levy. Combined with the district's permanent tax rate, the total tax rate would be approximately \$2.97 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which is identical to, or less than, other fire districts in Columbia County that provide 24-hour staffing.

With the final payment of the water tender purchased through the vehicle bond approved by voters in 2017, the estimated \$0.18 per \$1,000 of assessed value currently collected for that bond will no longer be assessed to district taxpayers. Therefore, the net tax increase from this levy lift would be approximately \$0.60 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Revenue generated by the proposed levy would be used to maintain and improve fire and emergency medical services within the district. Funds would help address rising operational costs and support several service improvements, including:

- Replacing an inoperable breathing apparatus refill station, which is necessary to refill air tanks used by firefighters during emergency response.
- Increasing the Fire Chief position by 13 hours per week, transitioning the role from part-time back to full-time.
- Adding approximately 30 hours per week of additional coverage by part-time Firefighter/EMTs to help increase daytime staffing to two Firefighter/EMTs, when volunteer responders are often unavailable due to work commitments.
- Replacing outdated Fire & Rescue equipment.
- Replacing aging wildland personal protective equipment (PPE), some of which is more than 30 years old, to improve firefighter safety during wildfire response.
- Increasing the training budget
- Constructing a small training structure on district property

The estimated tax increase for a home with an assessed value of \$200,000 would be approximately \$156 per year, or \$13 per month. The average assessed value of homes within the district is \$156,205, meaning the estimated cost for many households may be lower than the example provided. Assessed value is not the same as market value. You can find your assessed value by looking at your Columbia County Tax Statement.

The estimated amount of revenue from the levy each year is:

- \$714,024 in 2026–2027 (approximately \$438,312 - current levy amount and \$275,712 - proposed levy increase)
- \$735,445 in 2027–2028 (approximately \$451,461 - current levy amount and \$283,984 - proposed levy increase)
- \$757,508 in 2028–2029 (approximately \$465,005 - current levy amount and \$292,503 - proposed levy increase)
- \$780,233 in 2029–2030 (approximately \$478,955 - current levy amount and \$301,278 - proposed levy increase)
- \$803,640 in 2030–2031 (approximately \$493,324 - current levy amount and \$310,316 - proposed levy increase)

Approval of this measure would allow the district to replace the existing levy with the proposed levy rate and use the funds for the purposes described above.

Person responsible for the content of the Explanatory Statement:

Greg Brody

(Name: TYPED)

X

(Name: SIGNED)

Fire Chief

Position

3/10/26

Date signed

Instructions

- The explanatory statement shall be typed.
- Word total: not to exceed 500 words.
- Signature: signed by the person responsible for the content of statement and to include the name of the governing body that person represents.
- Deadline: The statement filing deadline is the same deadline date as that of filing the Notice of Measure election (5pm)
- Note: The county clerk shall reject any referred measure submitted without an explanatory statement