

Proponents' statement of support for Deer Mountain Fire Protection District's mill levy override ballot issue.

The proposal to increase the mill levy for the Deer Mountain Fire District has been discussed several years by the district's board of directors. As revenues decline and costs increase, the Deer Mountain Fire District is faced with critical decisions of how to maintain and improve fire public safety needs of the district.

If approved, the ballot question would add four mills to the fire district's mill levy resulting in a total mill levy of 7.992 mills. It's estimated that the additional four mills would raise total tax revenue to \$187,000 each year for fire district equipment and operations. The four mills would add an extra annual cost of about \$31 for each \$100,000 in assessed property valuation. Current tax revenues are \$93,949.16.

The district board is considering spending perhaps half of the new funding to replace aging fire trucks. The second priority would be to address operating expenses, facilities improvements and personnel equipment and training.

With the limited revenues the Deer Mountain Fire District now collects, it is barely able to keep pace with monthly operational costs. The District does not have a routine capitol equipment replacement program and most of the trucks in the fire district fleet are upwards to 20 years old. Cost of maintaining this aging fleet of trucks is becoming very expensive. Another capitol expense the district must continue to consider is coming mandated upgrading radio communications to the latest 800 mhz radios which is the standard being required across Colorado so public safety agencies can communicate with each other.

While operational costs for fuel, utilities, building and truck maintenance, and firefighter training are increasing, revenues to the district are decreasing. With property valuations dropping countywide the fire district has lost revenue and will continue to lose revenue in the coming years which would further hinder the ability of the district to equip and maintain the kind of emergency fire services that citizens demand.

The Deer Mountain Fire District Board has always been active in pursuing grants and will continue to do so. However declining revenues have reached the point that the district believes this mill levy override question now makes the most sense to protecting our assets and meeting the district's obligations to protect lives and property.

Proponents for this measure believe this measure needs to go into effect in the tax year 2012 in order to maintain and stay current with the level of services now rendered to the community.