



Pinetop Fire District Calls for November Bond Election

The proposal would allow the district to co-locate an emergency service response station along with the wildland fire fighting activities set for future Fire Station 10

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PINETOP-LAKESIDE - (May 23, 2024) – Earlier this week, the Board of Directors for the Pinetop Fire District voted unanimously to call for a special election to seek voter approval to issue bonds for the purposes of building additional facilities, purchasing emergency equipment, and making other capital expenditures to improve fire and emergency coverage. The decision was the culmination of several months of work consulting with bond experts, modeling response times, exploring financial impacts, and other research. The \$11.6 million proposal will now appear on the November 5, 2024, General Election Ballot.

Chief Jim Morgan explained, “The board and district management have diligently and thoroughly reviewed this issue over the past several months to work towards making this determination. With the recent purchase of property for Fire Station 10 on the western boundary, voters will now have an opportunity to decide what will be located at that facility.”

Recently, the Pinetop Fire District purchased property at 234 W. White Mountain Blvd. for the future site of Fire Station 10. In addition, the district secured a federal grant to help pay for wildland fire fighting activities and provide base of operations for fighting wildfires at the new station. According to United States Senator Mark Kelly in a release announcing the grant, “This project will construct a new wildland fire response station, which will house the district’s wildland fire response division. Pinetop Fire District serves a high-risk wildfire community, and this new facility will prevent and combat area wildfires.”

“The district is considering co-locating an emergency service response station at Fire Station 10 to leverage these grants to allow us to use taxpayer money as effectively as possible,” said John Rowlinson, Chair of the Pinetop Fire District Board, “Our board of directors has determined that a bond would be an effective way to provide the necessary local match for the wildland fire operations as well as expand coverage in a financially responsible way.”

Bonds are used by Fire Districts to finance large capital projects like public safety facilities. The district sells bonds to investors to generate funding for the projects and then pays the investors back with interest over a period of time, in this case an expected repayment of 25 years. The sale and issuance of such general obligation bonds must first be authorized by a majority of the qualified electors of the District at a special bond election called for such purposes before the district can proceed. The estimated average tax rate for the proposed bond authorization is \$0.4163 per \$100 of net assessed limited property value.

“The \$11.6 million figure would be the maximum amount that the District could issue,” concluded Rowlinson, “However, we’re actively seeking additional street improvement and other grants to reduce the overall cost of the Fire Station 10. If successful, the District may issue a lower amount to cover the costs of the project.”

Over the next few months, the Pinetop Fire District will be providing the community with additional information regarding the bond and answering questions. For more information, voters can visit www.PinetopFire.com or call (928) 367-2199.

About the Pinetop Fire District

The Pinetop Fire District provides fire, emergency, and medical services to more than 9,500 residents with a seasonal population that can double to more than 20,000. The district has 25 full-time fire fighters, 6 wildland specialists, and can employ up to two dozen seasonal wildland firefighter employees depending on the needs of the community. Currently the district is served by two stations – Station 11 on the 260 and Pine Lake Road and Station 12 on Buck Springs. The Pinetop Fire District responds to approximately more than 2,000 calls a year for service – 70% of which are for emergency medical services.