

Our Dwindling Resources;  
Why we need to consider additional sustainable funding

The District's current revenue streams are not sufficient to sustain operations at an acceptable level without depleting our reserves. The continued use of Reserve funds to balance the operating budget could make the District insolvent within 3-4 years.

The 2015-2016 El Dorado County Civil Grand Jury's suggested that a possible avenue for attaining additional, sustainable funding for District operations would be to consider an upward adjustment to our Parcel Assessment for District Services.

Here are some Facts:

1. The Mosquito Fire Protection District is the smallest fire district on the west slope of El Dorado County. It encompasses approximately 13 square miles and has a population that averages 1500. Its call volume is among the lowest on the west slope. The District receives property tax revenues of approximately \$123,000 and revenues from a parcel assessment of approximately \$180,000 for a total annual revenue of \$303,000. However the average operating budget over the last two fiscal years has been \$401,000.
2. Without an increase in sustainable funding, the District cannot continue to provide even the current level of service which is 2 people on duty 8 hours per day/7 days a week
3. The District receives about 10 cents of every dollar of property tax collected. Early on the District's residents realized that to adequately fund the fire department's operations additional funding would be necessary. Thus the first "Parcel Assessment" was approved by the voters. That assessment remained static until 2001 when the District again asked the voters to increase the assessment to its current level. Fiscal year 2002-2003 started the parcel fee at \$144 with increases yearly till fiscal year 2007-2008 when the rate of \$204 per parcel was reached. There have been no increases for 10 years.
4. While our property tax funding has increased slightly for the past 15 years, the cost of operations has rapidly outpaced those increases. Equipment costs, staffing costs, fuel and energy cost and general overhead costs have steadily risen at a greater rate.
5. El Dorado County provided the district "Supplemental Funding" until 2015. Facing their own budget difficulties, the County stopped providing that funding source and there are no plans to reinstate it.
6. The current service level provided by the District is **8 hours** of coverage 7 days a week. This service level relies heavily on our "volunteer" firefighters. They are our first responders for 16 hours each day. Our volunteers do an outstanding job! But, Federal and State mandates for new and expanded training for volunteers (nearly the same as those for paid firefighters) has made reliance solely on volunteers risky. Therefore, the approved MIMIMUN service level for district operations is 2 paid staff on duty 24/7.

7. For the most part, the community is aware of the importance of our Fire Department. If it went away the property insurance rate in the District would skyrocket and in many cases policies could/would be cancelled. The response to medical calls for services would be 35-45 minutes; devastating in some instances. Responses to small vegetation or structure fires that, if quickly and aggressively attacked, might remain small events, would most likely become large events due to delayed response. And finally, if the District should become fiscally insolvent, our paid staff, our equipment, our fire station, etc. would all disappear.
8. Spending our reserves for operations will leave us unable to replace apparatus and equipment when they exceed their useful life.

Prop 13 controls our general property taxes. If we want to continue our district operations we need to increase our sustainable funding.