MANSON FIRE DEPT

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Manson Fire District #5 Commissioners Approve Ballot Measure for Facilities, Training and Equipment

MANSON, July 5, 2024 -- It's been ten years since the last tax levy for the Chelan County Fire District #5 was approved by voters in 2014. But since 2014, property values have risen nearly three and a half times and the local fire tax rate has decreased due to WA state law limiting tax increases to 1 percent per year, plus new construction, a rate below the rate of inflation.

"The Manson Fire Department must operate within its income," said Fire Commissioner and Chairman Fred Weiss. "Our District's population has increased along with the number of volunteer fire fighters. Plus, training and equipment expenses have risen along with everything else. What's more, our 29-year-old fire truck will need to be replaced"

In addition to Commissioner Weiss, Commissioners Dan Baker and Chris Willoughby voted unanimously to place the replacement tax measure on the August 6 primary ballot.

"To keep our fire department readiness up to standard and improve the capabilities of our 40 volunteer firefighters with regards to structure, vehicle fire, wildfire fighting, EMS and water rescue, our income must match at least our critical needs," Fire Chief Arnold Baker said

Manson Fire is always looking for new volunteers – Stop by the office (250 Manson Blvd) across from the swim area and inquire! Great Benefits!

Levy Funds are used for:

1. Hiring and training staff. The Manson's Fire District #5 is an all-volunteer department with three paid staff to support the 40 volunteer firefighters. The levy would support personnel additions, expressly a full-time training position to aid volunteer firefighters to complete L&I required training & certifications to meet the growing needs of the Manson community.
2. Upgrading and operational cost for facilities. Contingency funds if grant funds fall short for construction. Constructing a new training facility is covered on our current 2024 budget.
3. Purchasing equipment. Funds new fire-fighting equipment and to replace a 30-year-old truck plus safety gear, hoses, and add a wildland engine to enhance structure protection during wildfires.
4. Operational expenses. This includes everything from fuel for fire trucks, to utilities, to personal protective equipment and vehicle maintenance. In addition, the funds will help Manson's Fire District #5 address the impacts of inflation.

Financial Stability. The current levy will expire at the end of the year. Voters approved $0.89 per thousand in 2014. That levy rate has fallen to $0.41 per thousand dollars of assessed property value in 2024. If a new levy is not approved by the voters, the Fire District will be limited to the last permanent levy of 2005, at an estimated rate per thousand near $0.21. The replacement levy is proposed at $0.75 per thousand assessed value. This measure would provide adequate funding for Fire District goals in the coming years.

Just What is a Fire Levy?

This ballot measure is a local tax that must be approved by voters specifically to fund fire protection within the Manson Fire District #5. Fire levies are the primary source of income used to fund the fire protection and emergency medical services provided by Manson Fire District #5.

A Profile of Manson's Volunteer Firefighters:

40-Volunteers, 2-Full time, 1-Half time

Outdoor Burn Ban as of June 1.

Fire safety burn bans protect people when the air is unhealthy and protect residents and property when wildfire danger is high. Chelan County Commissioners banned outdoor burning as of June 1st in unincorporated areas of Chelan county. Campfires are allowed for an unspecified time, a ban on campfires is expected this summer. With wildfire on the horizon, let's work together to keep our community safe

What Would Happen if the August 6 Levy is not approved by the voters?

General conclusion: The Manson Fire Department #5 tax revenue would be reduced by approximately fifty percent, near $400,000 loss of revenue. Fire Commissioners will be faced with difficult decisions about District business with a reduced staff. Community growth and training requirements have demanded more attention. The current staff is focused to maintain business and financial affairs of the District and keeping volunteers prepared for response. How those tasks are to be completed with reduced staff is not known.

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

PRSRT MRKT
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO 2
MANSON WA

ECRWSS