

NEVADA COUNTY CONSOLIDATED FIRE DISTRICT NEEDS
YOUR SUPPORT ON THE FIRE MEASURE

The ongoing economic meltdown has created lots of pain in Nevada County -- including job loss, reduction in wages, and a drastic devaluation of local real estate values.

For many, the decline in property values has resulted in sizeable reductions in property taxes. Although good for the property owner, this devaluation has resulted in millions of dollars of lost revenue to fund desperately needed basic services, including fire protection, medical and multi-hazard emergency response.

Nevada County Consolidated Fire District (NCCFD) is responsible for providing emergency services to 150 square miles of Western Nevada County serving about 35,000 residents. Last year, NCCFD's personnel responded to over 5,200 emergency calls for help!

Because of property reevaluation, NCCFD HAS LOST OVER \$260,000 IN PROPERTY TAX REVENUE PER YEAR SINCE 2009. Additionally, annual revenues from new home construction and commercial MITIGATION FEES have dropped \$320,000 since 2006.

All of the District's personnel have worked diligently with the District's elected Board of Directors to reduce costs everywhere possible to maintain emergency services. This includes District employees voluntarily eliminating salary increases and other concessions, which results in a 7% cut in salaries as well paying for a larger portion of their medical benefits. Many other cost cutting measures have also been implemented to date.

To reduce costs even further, two years ago the District opted not to replace personnel lost to attrition. Unfortunately, by August of this year, it became impossible for NCCFD to consistently staff emergency personnel twenty-four hours a day on all our first-out fire engines. This resulted in rotating station closings ("brown outs") of three of fire stations and a decrease in available emergency resources.

In November, the NCCFD Board reluctantly decided to ask the citizens of our District to restore the revenues lost over the past years as well as decide upon what level of emergency services they would like us to provide in the future. In early February, all registered voters within the District will receive a mail-in ballot asking them to support a small, additional assessment on their property. The size of this new assessment varies by the various types of property owned as outlined below:

PROPERTY TYPE	RATE
Residential Dwelling Unit	\$52.00 for the first dwelling unit
Residential Dwelling Units (if more than 1 unit)	\$39.00 for each additional dwelling
Unimproved Property	\$26.00 per parcel
Commercial, Industrial, Office, Recreational Property	\$00.04 per square foot
Commercial with sprinklers installed	\$00.02 per square foot

Ballots will be received in the mail around February 8th, and they must be returned by mail by March 6th, 2012 to be counted. This measure will only become law if 67% of the voters approve the measure. Your YES vote is thus extremely important if you want the District to maintain its existing level of service.

We fully expect that even with the requested revenue increase, the economy over the next few years will continue to challenge our management's ability to maintain quality emergency services in Nevada County. But without this increase, there is no doubt that very significant cuts in personnel will have to be implemented immediately. Such cuts will significantly increase response time. In an "extremely high fire danger area" like Nevada County, minutes can make the difference between a minor house fire and a raging wildland fire.

For less than a cup of coffee a week, voters can secure the existing, quality emergency response service they desire and deserve.

Additional information is available on our website: nccfire.com or contact us by phone at 273-3158. We look forward to answering your questions.

Warren Knox is the Chairman of the Board of the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District and resides in the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District.