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## 2024 WEST SIDE RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL OPTION LEVY FACT SHEET

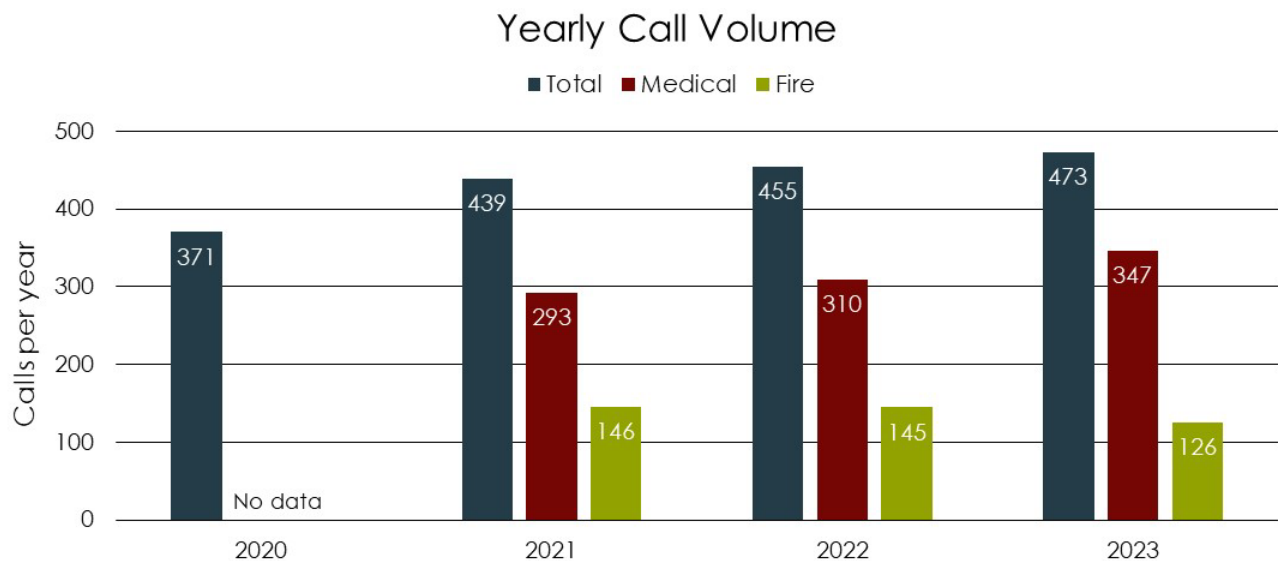
- ▶ **Board approval.** The West Side Fire District's Board of Directors voted unanimously on February 8, 2024 to refer the replacement local option levy to the May 21, 2024 ballot.
- ▶ **Amount of local option replacement levy referred.** If approved, the levy would replace the current local option levy approved by voters in 2019. The new local option levy tax rate would be 97¢ per \$1,000 of assessed (not market) value. This is an increase of 47¢ over the current levy. It would be assessed for five years beginning in 2025 and ending in 2030.
- ▶ **Purpose of funds.** Funds from the replacement levy would be used to retain West Side Fire's current staff of three; two firefighter/EMTs and one Chief who is a firefighter/paramedic. The District would also be able to hire two additional firefighter/EMTs. This would enable the District to have at least one fully-trained and licensed firefighter/EMT on duty 24/7. Currently the District has at least one firefighter/EMT on duty from 7 am until 5 pm every day of the week. During evenings and nights, the District relies on volunteers to respond to emergency calls.

West Side Fire currently has about 40 volunteers. However, while volunteers provide vital support services, most of are not trained firefighters or EMTs. Currently only two are trained firefighters. None are EMTs. Currently about 60% of emergency calls to the District occur during evenings and nights.

- ▶ **Key community benefits.** If the replacement levy is approved by voters, two additional fully-trained/licensed firefighter/EMTs would be hired by the District. This would result in:
  - ▶ **24/7 coverage by at least 1 fully-trained firefighter/EMT.**
  - ▶ **Faster response times.** Because a firefighter/EMT would always be on duty, residents would experience faster response to both medical and fire emergencies. This would be especially true during evenings and nights, when the District currently relies on volunteers who must come from their homes or businesses to respond.
  - ▶ **Better cardiac arrest survival rates.** Time is critical during these types of events. Because a fully-trained firefighter/EMT would always be available to respond, cardiac arrest survival rates should improve.
- ▶ **Amount to be raised.** The requested tax rate would raise approximately \$712,00 in 2025-26, the first year of the levy. The amount raised is estimated to increase by about \$20,000 each year of the levy.
- ▶ **Impact on property owners.** The cost to property taxpayers in the District depends on the assessed (not market) value of their property. For residential property valued at \$218,000, about average for the District, the cost would be approximately \$211 per year or \$18 per month. This is an increase of \$102 per year or \$8.50 per month over the current levy.

- ▶ **Impact if the levy renewal fails.** The local option levy is an important part of West Side Fire’s budget. If a new levy is not approved, the District would likely have to lay off two of its three current employees and increase its reliance on volunteers. However, as people’s lifestyles have changed over the past decades and the skills needed to provide emergency medical and firefighting services have increased, the District, like fire district’s nationwide, are finding it harder to recruit, train, and retain volunteers
- ▶ **West Side Fire’s local option levy history.** West Side Fire’s local option levy was first approved by voters in May of 2014. In May 2019, the levy was renewed with a 78% “yes” vote.
- ▶ **Area served by West Side Fire.** West Side Fire serves the residents of an approximately 25 square mile area west and south of the City of Hood River. The area includes homes, businesses, farms, and orchards.
- ▶ **Services provided by West Side Fire.** The District’s staff includes both paid paramedic/firefighters and volunteer responders who provide:
  - ✓ Emergency Medical Response (basic and advanced)
  - ✓ Fire Suppression including structural and wildland fires
  - ✓ Fire Investigation
  - ✓ Fire Prevention Services and Public Education
  - ✓ Hazardous Materials Response
  - ✓ Rescue Services: Motor vehicle collisions and trail rescues
  - ✓ Disaster preparedness
- ▶ **Number of emergency calls.** In 2023, West Side Fire responded to 473 emergency calls. Almost three-quarters of these calls were medical emergencies.

**AS OUR COMMUNITY GROWS AND AGES,  
MEDICAL-RELATED CALLS ARE INCREASING**



- ▶ **West Side Fire District’s tax rate compared to other nearby fire districts.** West Side Fire’s total tax rate — including the permanent rate and the local option levy — is below that of most other nearby fire districts. The table below provides a comparison of 2023-24.

<b>Fire District</b>	<b>Total tax rate permanent + bond + levy</b>
Wy’East Fire	\$1.07
<b>West Side Fire</b>	<b>\$1.28</b>
Parkdale Fire	\$1.55
Mosier Fire	\$2.10
City of The dalles	\$2.10
City of Cascade Locks	\$2.70
City of Hood River	\$2.81

***For more information on West Side Fire District or the replacement levy, contact Chief Administrative Officer, Doug Kelly (541) 386-1550, [doug.kelly@westsidefire.com](mailto:doug.kelly@westsidefire.com).***