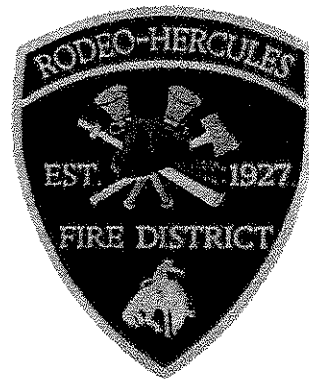


**OFFICIAL NOTICE AND BALLOT
INFORMATION GUIDE
FOR THE PROPOSED
FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE SERVICES ASSESSMENT**



**FOR THE
RODEO HERCULES FIRE DISTRICT**

Why Did You Receive This Ballot?

You are a property owner served by the Rodeo Hercules Fire District and are being asked to vote on a proposed funding measure to ensure continued and improved fire protection and emergency response services in the communities of Rodeo and Hercules in western Contra Costa County.

Your ballot is your opportunity to participate in deciding whether local funding should be approved for continued and improved fire protection, fire suppression, and emergency response services. Your vote on this matter is important because only returned ballots will be counted.

The Rodeo Hercules Fire District

The Rodeo Fire District was formed in 1937 and expanded to provide fire protection and emergency response services to the the City of Hercules in 1978.

Today, the Fire District serves a population of just over 34,000 residents, covering 32 square miles of urban, suburban and rural environment. The Fire District responds to over 2,000 service calls per year, including structure, wildland, and vehicle fires, traffic collisions, entrapments and rescues, industrial accidents and hazardous materials incidents and emergency medical calls. In addition, the Fire District provides fire prevention, community education, emergency preparedness and other services relating to the protection of lives and property. The District occasionally responds to emergencies outside of its boundaries as part of mutual aid agreements, but is uniquely qualified and located to provide services within Rodeo and Hercules.

The Fire District is governed by a five member Fire District Board. Directors are elected by the registered voters within the Fire District boundaries and serve four-year terms. The Fire District has two fire stations: Station #76 in Hercules which is currently in operation, and Station #75 in Rodeo which was closed in May 2012 due to funding issues resulting from tax shifts and severe reductions in local property values.

Regular board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m., at the Rodeo Hercules Fire District, 1680 Refugio Valley Rd, Hercules, CA 94547. The public is encouraged to attend.

Why Is A Funding Measure Needed?

The Rodeo Hercules Fire District is primarily funded from local property taxes and limited funding from previous benefit assessments. Due to a significant reduction in property values and the associated reduction in property tax revenues since 2008, the Fire District has sought revenue enhancements and implemented significant cost cutting strategies including the closure of Station #75 in Rodeo in 2012, staff reductions, deferred maintenance of equipment and apparatus, re-negotiated pension/benefit plans and salary rates.

The current funding for fire protection and emergency response services has not kept pace with the increases in demand for these services, as well as higher, more costly, standards of care, maintenance costs and training requirements. The Fire District has continued to improve its service levels while maintaining a limited budget.

The Fire District seeks to return to a higher level of fire protection and emergency response services through reopening Station #75 in Rodeo, as well as returning to appropriate staffing levels, providing for improved apparatus replacement, improved equipment replacement, increased firefighter training, and improved maintenance and operations of Station #76 in Hercules.

Public Accountability Standards

The funds from this assessment can only be used to provide fire protection and emergency response services within the Fire District area. The revenues and expenditures for this assessment will be regularly audited by an independent auditor and will be presented annually at a public hearing.



Funds from this measure will be used in the community, including creating new full-time positions for local firefighters



Rodeo Hercules Fire District firefighters use modern life-saving equipment that would be provided for with this measure

How Was The Assessment Determined?

The total annual costs of the proposed, improved operations and maintenance of Stations #75 and #76, additional firefighter staffing, improved apparatus and equipment replacement, and other services to be funded by the assessment would be allocated to each property based on the estimated special benefit received.

The method of benefit allocation is based on the relative special benefit to a property in relation to a single family home, the type of property, and its size. The total proposed amount of assessment for your property is shown on the enclosed ballot. If you own multiple properties, your ballot will show the total proposed assessment amount for each one.

The types of special benefit would primarily include increased safety and protection of real properties. An Engineer's Report describing the proposed improvements, method and basis upon which the amount of the proposed assessment was calculated, special benefits, budgets and proposed assessment for each parcel is available for review at 1680 Refugio Valley Rd, Hercules, CA 94547.

What Would This Measure Provide?

The increased funding to the District would be used to:

Re-Open the Rodeo Fire Station

The funding from this measure would allow the Fire District to re-open the Rodeo fire station to return fire protection and emergency response services to the appropriate level for the Rodeo - Hercules communities.

Improve Operations of Hercules Fire Station

The proposed funding measure would allow the Fire District to improve the operations and maintenance of the Hercules fire station to provide fire protection services in the most effective and efficient way.

Maintain Fire Protection and Emergency Services

The funding from this measure would allow the Fire District to maintain professional firefighters staffed at the Rodeo - Hercules fire stations, 24 hours every day to provide fire protection and rescues, and to respond to emergencies.

Ensure Rapid Emergency Response Times

The Fire District will be able to fund firefighter positions that are necessary to ensure rapid emergency response. OSHA requires that personnel use self-contained breathing apparatus, that a minimum of two firefighters work as a team inside the structure, and that a minimum of two firefighters be on standby outside the structure to provide assistance or perform rescue. Essentially, the "2 in, 2 out" rule protects our firefighters but also requires sufficient staffing levels.

Keep Fire Protection Under Local Control

The proposed funding ensures that the local community maintains oversight over the quality, expenditures, and policies of the Fire District through the elected Board and citizen participation.

Fire Equipment and Apparatus Maintenance

The measure would support improved maintenance and replacement for aging equipment and apparatus replacement. This dedicated funding would allow the Fire District to have up-to-date and up-to-standards equipment and apparatus for years to come.

How Much Is the Proposed Assessment?

The proposed assessment for your property or properties for fiscal year 2014-15 is printed on the Official Ballot included with this notice and information guide. For single-family homes on an acre or less, the annual assessment is proposed to be a maximum of \$82.00, while the proposed assessment for other residential property types is based on the number of dwelling units and parcel size. Multi-family dwellings have a proposed assessment of \$46.93 per unit, which is the same amount for a condominium. Commercial, industrial and other properties are assessed according to their parcel size and property type. For example, retail stores would be assessed \$60.30 per fifth of an acre of property size. The Fire District is committed to assessing only the portion of the maximum allowable rate necessary. If a lower rate will meet the Fire District's funding needs, the Board will assess at a lower rate. The total estimated amount assessed to the entire area subject to this assessment would be approximately \$948,329 for fiscal year 2014-15.

Will This Assessment Increase in the Future?

The assessment will be continued in future years as long as the Fire District Board approves the annual resolution for continuation of this assessment. In future years after 2014-15, the assessment can only be adjusted for inflation by an amount equal to the change in the Northern California (San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose) Consumer Price Index, but not to exceed 4% per year. This annual adjustment, which must be reviewed and approved annually at a public meeting, will help keep the assessment revenues in line with the cost of providing fire protection and emergency response services in future years.



Funds from this proposed assessment would be required by law to be used for fire protection and emergency response services in the district



The services this measure would fund are critical for protecting property and life

Method of Voting

To complete the enclosed official ballot, mark the oval next to either Yes or No, sign the ballot, fold it in half and place it in the provided postage paid return envelope and mail to Rodeo Hercules Fire District, C/O Carol Keane & Associates, CPAs, 1660 Olympic Blvd. Suite 200, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. You may also hand deliver it at the public hearing (see below for the times and location). Only official ballots which are signed and marked with the property owner's support or opposition will be counted. Ballots are due Wednesday, May 14, 2014.

If you lose your ballot, require a replacement ballot, or want to change your vote, call the Rodeo Hercules Fire District at (510) 799-4561 for another ballot. See the enclosed ballot for additional instructions. Ballots are weighted by the proposed amount of assessment and will be tabulated accordingly. The assessment will not be imposed if, upon the conclusion of the public hearing, weighted ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceed the weighted ballots submitted in favor of the assessment. If a majority of weighted ballots returned are in support, the assessment may be levied for fiscal year 2014-15 and may be continued in future years to fund fire protection and emergency response services as directed by the Board.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Rodeo Hercules Fire District Station #76, 1680 Refugio Valley Rd, Hercules, California . You are invited to attend the public hearing. Tabulation of the returned ballots will commence after the close of the public input portion of the hearing on May 14, 2014, and the results of the tabulation are expected to be announced at the board meeting on June 11, 2014.

Additional Information

For additional information concerning Rodeo Hercules Fire District services, the proposed assessment, or this ballot, please contact:

Rodeo Hercules Fire District
1680 Refugio Valley Rd,
Hercules, CA 94547
(510) 799-4561

