Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to report to you the results of our multi-year listening and engagement efforts regarding the community’s expectations of the fire department performance and the Big Bear Fire Authority’s ability to provide fire protection and emergency medical service to meet that expectation.

I also want to thank those of you who responded to our survey online or by mail, attended one of our many service groups, associations, elected governing boards of Big Bear Valley, and community-wide meetings. More than 1,000 residents responded to questions regarding 911 response time, fire and emergency medical service levels, fire department performance expectations, and ultimately cost of service.

To address the fire protection and emergency medical service needs and expectations of our Big Bear community, at its October 1, 2019 Board meeting, the governing Board of Big Bear Fire Authority authorized the creation of a Community Facilities District (CFD) and an associated tax measure to go before voters on March 3, 2020. Based on service need or use, 53% of this new tax revenue is achieved by assessing visitors, ski resorts, and commercial properties. Forty-seven percent (47%) is achieved through a residential property tax.

Please take a moment to read this informational mailer to learn more about the proposed CFD tax measure. Thank you for your interest and input. Please feel free to contact me with any additional comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Jeff Willis, Big Bear Fire Authority Fire Chief
Big Bear Fire Authority
PO Box 2830
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

BBFA, providing local access to emergency medical, fire protection, natural disaster response, and other emergency services.
PLEASE READ! Important information regarding your local fire and emergency medical services.
The Big Bear Fire Department does not currently have enough personnel or lifesaving equipment to meet the current service demands for day-to-day operations.

Without additional funding, Fire Department staffing will be reduced by 6 personnel which equals 2 positions daily. This will result in the closure of a fire station and increased response times.

Our Fire Department experienced 112 instances of level zero availability in 2018. Level zero is defined as, “No apparatus or personnel are available to respond to the next 911 call for emergency service.” Level zeros are trending up for 2019. Additional firefighters/paramedics will correct this 5-year trend.

The American Heart Association states that brain deterioration starts between 4 and 6 minutes after a person stops breathing. The average 911 response time in Big Bear is currently 9 minutes, 20 seconds. This can only be reduced with additional firefighters/paramedics and apparatus.

In 2018, more than 53% of all 911 calls in our community were medical emergencies, such as heart attacks, strokes, and car accidents.

Weather conditions are fueling larger fires, including the Summit Fire, the Holcomb Fire, and the Lake Fire. Big Bear firefighters need the resources and tools to fight fires effectively when a fire strikes here in the Big Bear Valley.
The Big Bear Fire Authority Governing Board has placed a Community Facilities District (CFD) tax measure on the March 2020 ballot seeking voter authorization for funding to:

- Keep all our local fire stations open.
- Ensure that we have enough firefighters and paramedics to reduce response times to 911 medical emergencies and fire incidents.
- Hire 12 firefighters to correctly staff our fire engines and put an additional ambulance in service to keep our community safe.
- Repair or replace fire/medical equipment and apparatus, and repair aging fire stations.

A “YES vote” approves the Authority’s plan; a “NO vote” rejects it.

**HOW WILL IT BE SPENT?**

- Fund current operating deficit and ongoing operational costs ........................................ 1,730,764
- Hire 3 firefighter/paramedics for the Big Bear City Station ........................................... 537,906
- Hire 3 firefighter/paramedics for the Sugarloaf Station ................................................. 537,906
- Hire 6 firefighter/paramedics to staff an additional ambulance ...................................... 1,325,814

**TOTAL ................................................................................................................................. $4,132,390**

**HOW MUCH ADDITIONAL REVENUE IS GENERATED?**

**Source: Visitors and Commercial**

- Includes ski resorts, commercial properties, hotels, motels, time shares, and private rentals ........................................ 53% of total .... $2,171,240

**Source: Residential Property Owners**

- Parcel tax of 6¢ per sq. ft. of living space and $35 per vacant lot ..................................... 47% of total .... $1,961,150

**Grand TOTAL ..................................................................................................................... $4,132,390**

**WHAT WILL IT COST?**

- **Source: Visitors and Commercial**
  - Ski Resorts .................................................. $750,000
  - Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) ............. 1% (Separate City Council Action taken)
  - Hotels/Motels/Time shares ........................ $78 per hotel/motel room
  - Private Home Rentals ............................... $78 per bedroom
- **Source: Residential Property Owners**
  - Residential Properties ...................... 6¢ per sq. ft.
  - Vacant ......................................................... $35 per parcel
- **Commercial Properties .......... 6¢ per sq. ft.
- Commercial Vacant ......................... $35 per parcel
- New Construction ....................... 67¢ per sq. ft. (When permit is pulled)

*Rates may increase based on CPI as approved by the Board annually.*
On the Horizon

**Election Day is Tuesday, March 3rd**

Vote by Mail ballots go out the week of February 3rd.
Last day to register to vote is February 18th.

For more information on voting, contact the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters at: www.sbcountyelections.com or by phone: 800-881-VOTE

For more information on the BBFA plan, visit:

www.bigbearfire.com

OR contact Fire Chief Jeff Willis.
📞 (909) 866-7566
✉️ ChiefJeffWillis@bigbearfire.org

If approved by voters, the CFD will include:

- An exemption for low income seniors.
- An exemption for low income permanently disabled persons.

**Taxpayer safeguards:**

- Independent Citizens’ Oversight and mandatory audits to verify funds are being spent according to the measure.
- Funds can only be used for Big Bear Fire and Emergency Services.
- Neither the State, nor any other government agency, can take this funding for any other purpose.

For more information on the BBFA plan, visit: www.bigbearfire.com

OR contact Fire Chief Jeff Willis.
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