



## Kuna Rural Fire District

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **KRFD Board of Fire Commissioners to Consider Resolutions for Funding**

*Smaller operating levy increase and a facility bond reduces annual cost for taxpayers*

Kuna, Idaho — The Board of Fire Commissioners for the Kuna Rural Fire District will discuss two resolutions to place funding requests on the November 8, 2022 General Election ballot. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 10 at 1 p.m. at Kuna City Hall located at 751 W. Fourth St. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

If the Board approves the resolutions, voters in the fire district will see a small operating levy increase for more emergency personnel and a bond for a fire station on their ballots this fall. The projected cost for both proposals would be \$6.59 per month (\$79.06 per year) for the average homeowner.

The agency had tried to fund these needs by increasing its operating levy, and voters turned down the proposal due to the higher cost. Splitting off the station and funding it with a bond has reduced the annual out-of-pocket cost for property owners.

“These are real needs for our community, and we’ve figured out a way to get it done to reduce impacts to taxpayers,” Chief T.J. Lawrence said. “The bond will eventually be paid off and removed from the property tax rolls altogether.”

Emergency call volumes for the community have increased 72.42% in the past 10 years – 17.3% in the last year alone. The population in the Fire District is projected to increase by 74% in the next 10 years. Overlapping calls – or emergencies that happen at the same time – are coming in 25% of the time and that number is increasing.

The operating levy increase will fund additional emergency personnel. The KRFD has just five firefighters per shift to respond to over 2,000 calls per year. This includes a three-person engine company when the national standard calls for four. Two other firefighters are in a smaller “squad” vehicle primarily for medical emergencies. If any employee is on sick leave, vacation, or injured, there is only one unit in service.

In 2021, the KRFD stopped transporting patients to area hospitals because it took emergency personnel out of the service area for an extended period of time, which increased emergency response times. Ada County Paramedics are now providing transport services out of the Kuna Fire Station. Even with this help, there are times when overlapping calls occur and there are no firefighters to send.

The bond would fund a second fire station for the community. Adequate facilities are as important as firefighters to saving lives and property. The KRFD has a Capital Improvement Plan to identify stations

and apparatus needed to serve the community as it grows. The agency is able to charge “impact fees” for new development. However, impact fees may only be used for capital items, like fire stations, and that revenue is not enough to build a second station that the community requires. Ideally, a community should have one fire station per 10,000 people. The KRFD has one station to serve almost 34,000 residents.

“Staffing levels are not safe for our community or its firefighters. That’s really hard for me to say as this community’s fire chief. We also cannot effectively serve our neighbors, families, friends and residents with one fire station,” Chief Lawrence said. “We are at the breaking point, and people need to know that.”

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*The Kuna Rural Fire District (KRFD) provides fire suppression, life safety, and emergency medical services to 33,390 people across 110 square miles. Fifteen full-time firefighters responded to more than 2,007 calls in 2021 – a 72.42% increase compared to 10 years ago. EMS accounts for 63% of all calls, and overlapping calls occur 25% of the time. The agency operates under a balanced budget, is debt free, and has passed all its independent audits per state law.*