



**MCFD1 breathing sigh of relief after levy approval**

After suffering through a pair of failed levies over the last year, Marion County Fire District #1 (MCFD1) had their local option levy (Measure #24-455) pass with over 60% of the vote at the May 18 Special District election.

The levy, which will last for the next five years, is for \$0.59 per \$1,000 of assessed property value — or \$59 (\$4.92 per month) per \$100,000 of value.

“We were absolutely ecstatic. It was great to know that our message was received,” said MCFD1 fire chief Kyle McMann. “We know things are tight still, but now we can limit liability for our firefighters and our citizens.”

After receiving a \$0.71 levy from 2016 to 2020, the district asked voters to increase the levy by \$0.28 at the primary election in May 2020, but at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ballot measure was not approved — it was the first time a levy wasn’t approved in the history of the district.

At the November 2020 general election, MCFD1 asked voters to renew the \$0.71 levy, but once again the measure failed, forcing the district to cut \$2.4 million from their \$19.7 million budget — MCFD1 is an independent taxing district and receives no revenue from Marion County, the state or federal government, emergency services are funded through a permanent tax rate of \$1.90 of \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Due to the budget cuts, MCFD1 was forced to layoff 12 full-time firefighter/paramedics, close down fire stations in Macleay and Labish Center and take emergency apparatus out of service.

But with the passing of the levy, the district will be able to rehire nine firefighter/paramedic positions this summer and add a dedicated three-person engine company, which will be placed at the district’s Middle Grove location. The number of responding units will also increase from three to four, which will help with the delays in response times MCFD1 has experienced over the last year.

**KFD endured busiest summer in history**

It was a busy summer for Keizer Fire District (KFD) as the department experienced a substantial increase in call volume.

In July 2019, KFD responded to more than 500 calls service in a month, which at the time was a district record. That record was shattered last month as the district went on 608 calls for service in July for an average of 19.6 calls per day.

The 608 service calls broke the record for most calls the district had responded to in a month — KFD staffs one battalion chief, one engine company and three medic units per day, all with 10-12 firefighters.

“It has been extremely busy,” KFD Division Chief of Operations Brian Butler said. “Everyone has been inside for a year, we have been told to not do anything and stay at home. Then everything

opened up, and it just happened to be summer time. It has been a different summer because of those things, so we are trying to cope the best we can and try to maintain our staffing.”

Running over 19 calls per day has forced the district into long-range planning for the future as KFD is planning on renewing their local option levy at \$0.59 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2023. KFD Fire Chief Jeff Cowan said that KFD needs more resources, people and trucks, and that the district has been having ongoing conversations about future funding.

Along with running an exorbitant amount of medical calls, KFD firefighters also had an incredibly busy month on conflagrations. The district sent out multiple crews to numerous fires throughout the state, including the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon — one of the largest in state history.



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