



OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



3511 WOOLLEY ROAD • OSWEGO, IL 60543 • (630)554-2110 FAX: (630)554-8681

Michael Veseling, Fire Chief • Dick Kuhn, President • Bob Trip, Secretary

Ken Holmstrom, Treasurer • Rodger Long, Trustee • Jason Bragg, Trustee

Press Release

For Immediate Release
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Oswego Fire Protection District Explains its Referendum Seeking Tax Rate Increase "Rescue Tax"

(Oswego, IL) The Oswego Fire Protection District will be seeking voter approval at the April 6, 2021 consolidated election for a new tax to provide funds for emergency rescue equipment and crews. The 64 square mile District protects the Village of Oswego, Boulder Hill, much of the south side of the Village of Montgomery, approximately 1 ½ square miles of the Grande Park neighborhood in the Village of Plainfield, a small area of the United City of Yorkville, and the unincorporated county areas that lie between many of these municipal boundaries. In all, the Fire District protects more than 65,000 residents today in contrast to the approximately 27,000 in 2002.

The District's Board of Trustees carefully considered the District's declining reserves and increasing service demands before voting to submit the new tax rate to referendum. Since the District's last referendum over 18 years ago, the District's call volume has increased from 2,000 to over 5,700 calls/ year, staffing has increased from 17 firefighter/paramedics to 75, and stations have increased from 2 to 4. Another driving force behind the request is the significant increase in cost of apparatus and equipment. Emergency vehicles such as fire engines have increased from \$300,000 to over \$650,000, cardiac monitors have gone from \$14,000 to over \$44,000, and the firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus have gone up from \$2,000 to over \$7,000 in the past 18 years.

While the cost of providing emergency services has dramatically increased, Board President Richard Kuhn explained that the primary benefit to be derived from a successful referendum will be "to have a fourth ambulance in service full-time which increases the overall ambulance availability by over 12%". Fire Chief Michael Veseling stressed that the ability to have an additional ambulance ready to respond to the ever-increasing demand for emergency medical services "directly benefits our residents in their most dire circumstances. Minutes and seconds truly matter in medical emergencies and this will allow us to have an ambulance ready to roll out the door a greater percentage of time."

Before considering asking voters to approve a tax rate increase, the District has sought and received over \$1,000,000 in private, State, and Federal grants; secured almost \$750,000 in government surplus equipment; and established its own vehicle service program. The Board of Trustees also looked at the consequences of not seeking the



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additional tax authority. Looking at the projected growth for service demands in the next several years, Kuhn stated “the Board concluded without the additional revenue as service demands increase, ambulance availability will decrease, and response times will increase. The bottom line will be that we will not be able to provide the level of service we provide today. None of the Trustees find that acceptable so we are asking the residents to do their research, and vote.”

Chief Veseling advised that if the referendum passes the District estimates the increase in property taxes for the average homeowner will be under \$75.00, based on an average fair market value of \$225,000. The District will be offering informational meetings to various groups in the District and a “Friends of Oswego Fire” has formed. For more information or to host an informational meeting or join the Friends visit the District’s website www.oswegofire.com, email Chief Veseling at chief@oswegofire.com, email the Friends at friendsofoswegofire@oswegofire.com , or visit www.friendsofoswegofire.com .

The Oswego Fire Protection District was formed by voter referendum in March of 1936, covers over 60 square miles in the northeast portion of Kendall County and about 1.5 square miles of northwest unincorporated Will County.

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