

Brighton Fire Rescue District



Dear Residents and Business Owners:

Brighton Fire Rescue District (BFRD) provides 24-hour fire, rescue, and emergency medical coverage to an area covering 150 square miles including the City of Brighton and parts of Commerce City, Lochbuie, and unincorporated Adams and Weld Counties. BFRD currently serves 55,000 residents, an increase of more than 220% since 2000. Growth within BFRD is projected to continue at about 5% per year.

Emergency call volume is increasing as a result of the significant population growth and increased traffic. In the past three years, BFRD's call volume has increased almost 20%. In 2017, BFRD responded to 5,862 emergency calls. Our Firefighters and Firefighter/Medics respond to structural, wildland and vehicle fires, emergency medical incidents, vehicle accidents, hazardous materials emergencies, specialized rescue incidents (including those involving large and small animals) and other forms of emergencies. Increased call volume makes it difficult to maintain response times. In fact, we have experienced a steady increase in response times over the last 10 years.

To maintain and enhance current service levels, BFRD needs to add personnel, equipment and facilities. Station 52 at South 40th & Bridge Street is the busiest station and responds to incidents throughout BFRD. A 2nd response company is needed at this station to ensure that response times are maintained throughout BFRD. In addition, when BFRD's central area is busy, our crews must leave the areas to the east and west unprotected. An added response company will reduce the frequency of this happening. Finally, inadequate staffing also compromises firefighter safety.

While new home construction generates additional tax dollars, these revenues are not sufficient to address BFRD's rising costs to maintain emergency services. BFRD faces many funding challenges as a result of the significant population growth. To maintain emergency response times, an additional two Fire Stations must be built in the next 10 to 15 years. In addition to the cost of constructing the station, fire trucks and equipment must be purchased, and personnel hired for each station. We must also increase the capacity of the Fire Station on Main Street, and improve the training facility that provides for firefighter training.

BFRD recently earned an ISO-2 rating for any property within 1000 feet of a fire hydrant, and ISO-3 elsewhere. Only 3% of Fire Departments in the United States are class 2 or better. Maintaining our capabilities is critical to keeping this rating. Not maintaining our ISO rating may increase homeowners' and business owners' property insurance rates.

An additional challenge facing the District is a loss of property tax revenue as a result in a reduction of the residential assessment rate. The Gallagher Amendment to the Colorado Constitution requires the percentage of property taxes paid by residential property owners in the State to be 45% of the total taxes paid. In 2017, the Colorado Legislature reduced the residential assessment rate from 7.96% to 7.2%. Approximately 44% of the property in the District is residential which resulted in BFRD losing \$417,000 in revenue in 2018. Preliminary projections indicate the Colorado Legislature will further reduce the residential assessment rate to 6.11% in 2019, which will result in approximately an additional \$660,000 loss in property tax revenue to BFRD.

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The BFRD Board wants to inform its communities that the Board is evaluating whether to conduct an election in November 2018 to seek voter approval to increase its mill levy to help fund the personnel, equipment and stations needed to maintain and enhance the fire and emergency services BFRD provides its communities. BFRD's mill levy has been unchanged since 2006. The mill levy increase will also help to offset the property tax loss as a result of the Gallagher Amendment.

The Board has established a very specific plan for the next five years to address the effects of growth, the increase in call volume, and the subsequent increase in response times. This plan includes the hiring of 15 Firefighters, replacement of vital equipment including firefighter breathing tanks, and the improvement of an existing station and training facility as well as construction of an additional fire station. A summary of our plan is below:



The Board encourages your input on these important issues. A final decision on placing a mill levy increase on the ballot in November 2018 will be made this August. Please call or email Fire Chief Mark Bodane at:

Email: mbodane@brightonfire.org

Phone: 303.659.4101

Sincerely,

Dean Morris
President, Board of Directors