

Measure B would improve emergency medical services

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Voters residing within the Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District on Nov. 8 will consider a special fire tax for enhanced emergency medical services.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors last week adopted a resolution to place Measure B on the ballot at the request of the CalCo Board of Directors.

CalCo was formed on July 1, 2013 through a Joint Powers Agreement between Jenny Lind and Foothill Fire Protection districts. CalCo Fire covers roughly a 163 square mile area in the western portion of Calaveras County serving the communities of Valley Springs, Burson, Wallace, Campo Seco, Milton, Rancho Calaveras, La Contenta and Jenny Lind.

Measure B calls for an assessment of \$96 a year on the average residential parcel. It will take approval from two-thirds of voters to pass and raise approximately \$700,000 a year for the district.

CalCo's is the busiest fire protection district in Calaveras County, handling approximately 1,250 service calls last year, and nearly 80 percent of those were for medical assistance. The majority of firefighters are volunteers.

The special tax would go toward the establishment of fulltime paramedic service within the district.

CalCo Fire Chief Jason Robitaille said a website and video production to help explain the necessity for the tax are in the works.

"These are exciting times for the district," Chief Robitaille said. "Measure B will provide advanced life support to our residents."

The tax would give the district the funding to purchase and install advanced life support equipment on its engines and have a paramedic on each engine around the clock.

With the necessary equipment, paramedics would be able to provide more than cardiopulmonary resuscitation when they arrive at the scene. They could also offer advanced

life support services such as starting IVs, providing cardiac medication, or narcotics for pain management.

Those services can be provided by ambulance, operated by a private entity, but the majority of time CalCo firefighters arrive at the scene of a medical emergency minutes in advance of the ambulance service.

Measure B also calls for assessments of \$48 a year for unimproved parcels, \$76.80 for each additional residential dwelling on a parcel, \$67.20 for unimproved agricultural parcels and 5 cents per square foot of commercial, industrial, office or recreational properties.