

# Ambulance contract sought by fire chiefs

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The fire chiefs of Calaveras County have submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors asking for consideration to start a joint power authority to provide ambulance service.

American Legion Ambulance's contract to provide service to two of the three ambulance zones in the county expired last month. No bids were received when the contract went out to bid earlier this year.

The letter from the fire chiefs to the board states:

The Fire Chiefs of Calaveras County are very concerned about the possibility that there might not be an ambulance service provider in the near future which would be a disaster for the sick and injured patients that need transport. Therefore, the Calaveras County Fire District's JPA (Joint Power Authority) has voted unanimously to step up to the plate to bid on providing ambulance service to the North and South corridors of Calaveras County. The local fire districts already have the infrastructure in place and provide all of the emergency response to all areas of the county up to, but not including, transport.

Taking over patient transport would be a win-win for Calaveras County. Overhead is reduced. Fire stations can house fire, ambulance and personnel in centralized locations for faster response time within each district. Having supervision and coordination under one roof will provide higher quality, more efficient service at a lower cost to patients, provided by local citizens committed to their communities. Funding is also much more readily available to Fire Districts including Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) and Intergovernmental Ground Transport (IGT). Also, there are no costs for the ambulance service to the District, since all costs are paid by each patient's insurance and/or public health subsidies. Because the Local Fire Districts are under Calaveras County jurisdiction, the County Board of Supervisors will have more control over the Fire District's ambulance service.

Startup costs of approximately two million dollars will be necessary to get this project moving forward in its narrow time frame. The Fire Districts, through the JPA, are hoping to borrow \$2 million dollars seed money from the County which will be paid back after approximately two years according to their financial model.

The Calaveras County Fire JPA is in a strong position to provide a superior and cost effective Advanced Life Support transport with significant reduction in response times to the citizens of the County. The JPA is seeking permission to bid on the Calaveras County ambulance service.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Stone – Chairman  
Calaveras County Fire Joint Powers Authority