

Board backs CalCo request for higher development fees

By Nick Baptista

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Several years of preparation came to fruition when the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors adopted a new fire impact fee schedule Tuesday for the Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District.

The district received the green light from supervisors in 2017 to prepare a study to justify the fee increase on all new development in the district that includes the communities of Burson, Campo Seco, Jenny Lind, La Contensa, Milton, Rancho Calaveras, Valley Springs and Wallace.

The district eventually spent “\$40,000 into the study to get it right,” CalCo Fire Chief Rich Dickinson said. “We had to make sure to dot all the l’s and cross all the t’s.”

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli made the motion to approve the fee increase on all new development and District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper provided the second. Supervisors Dennis Mills and Merita Callaway voted in favor and Board Chairman Jack Garamendi was absent.

Dickinson said the fee increase would apply to all new development after a 60-day period, so some recent development such as Grocery Outlet and the Mark Twain Health Care District clinic will not be affected.

The money will only go toward new fire facilities, firefighting equipment and apparatus that can be attributed to new residential and nonresidential development, he added, and not personnel.

“Either we grow with the community, or we just stop growth,” Dickinson said in summing up the need for the fee increase.

Instead of a previous flat fee of \$300 for residential development, the new fee schedule charges per square foot of living area. The single-family rate is 90 cents per square foot, while a mobile home is 68 cents and a multi-family housing unit is \$1.06.

The fee for a new 2,000-square-foot single-family residence would be \$1,800.

In the past, the district received \$100 per 1,000 square feet of non-residential development. That fee has also been changed to square footage. Those fees are \$1.22 for retail/commercial, \$1.70 office, \$1.12 industrial; 60 cents warehouse/distribution, and 16 cents agriculture.

The fee for a new 2,000-square-foot office would be \$3,400.

The district is \$152,000 in the red this fiscal year, and the fee increase “will help us bridge that gap a bit,” Dickinson said. However, “it will not fix problems of the past.”