

**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PRINTING IN THE
MARION COUNTY VOTER PAMPHLET**

Measure No. 27-141

Election Date: May 16, 2023

On February 6, 2023, the Polk County Fire District No.1 Board of Directors voted unanimously to refer a 5-year local option levy, or operating levy, of \$0.78 cents per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value to the May 2023 ballot. If passed, the levy would go into effect in July of 2024 and would replace the current operating levy of \$0.19 cents per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value scheduled to expire in June of 2024.

An operating levy is being pursued because the District can no longer meet its ambulance response standards due to insufficient staffing to meet an increase in 911 response demands. Call volume has increased by 40% in the past two years and 85% in the past decade. The increase in call volume has resulted in more overlapping calls with not enough staff to respond to them. The usage of a second ambulance has increased in the same decade by 188%. Increasingly the District has had to rely on additional ambulance responses from Dallas, SW Polk RFPD, Salem, Albany, and Keizer due to staff being committed to other calls.

IF THE LEVY IS PASSED:

The operating levy is specifically aimed to support 911 response and does not increase administrative personnel.

If the levy passes, the District will:

1. Hire additional Firefighter/EMT's to staff an additional ambulance or fire engine 24 hours a day in order to meet response standards.
2. Fund seasonal daytime firefighters during the summer wildland fire season when call volume and fire impacts increase.
3. Fund the replacement of two ambulances that will reach the end of their service life during the 5-year levy.

IF THE LEVY DOES NOT PASS:

The Fire District is intentionally going out for this operating levy a year before the current levy expires. This way, should the levy fail, the Board has time to make difficult decisions regarding the level of service that the District can provide given the level of funding that the community is able to support.

There are, however, not only District response standards, but State and County Rules regarding response times for ambulances. If the District cannot fund its operations at a level that meet State and County requirements, the District may need to explore alternative ways to support emergency medical response within the District.

Further information can be obtained by calling 503-838-1510.

Total Words 387 (NOTE: This statement must not exceed 500 words.)

Authorized Signature Signature redacted Title Fire Chief

Printed Name Ben Stange

Local Government Unit Polk County Fire District No.1