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BECKWOURTH PEAK
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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FOUR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER AGENCIES ADOPT RESOLUTIONS TO FORM ONE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT IN EASTERN PLUMAS COUNTY

Boards of Directors for Beckwourth Fire District, Sierra Valley Fire District, Gold Mountain Community Services District and the City of Portola all adopted resolutions of application requesting the Plumas Local Agency Formation Commission to begin proceedings to form one new fire protection district.

APRIL 7, 2023 – PORTOLA, CALIF. – In February and March of 2023, four boards of directors unanimously voted in favor of pursuing the formation of one fire protection district (FPD) to serve the Eastern Plumas County area. The current fire and emergency services provided by Beckwourth Fire District, Sierra Valley Fire District, Gold Mountain Community Services District and the City of Portola would be reorganized into one FPD to provide services within the proposed FPD boundaries.

The effort to reorganize into one unified FPD began in 2020 with the formation of the Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG), which initiated a feasibility study in 2021 to determine if the formation of one FPD would be in the best interest of the communities that would receive fire and emergency medical services (EMS). The study confirmed substantial benefits to forming one new FPD with coordinated fire and EMS divisions representing each existing stations to serve Eastern Plumas communities.

“LESSG spent significant time vetting options about how to best fulfill fire and EMS services within the region given the constraints of funding, volunteer staff and operational inefficiencies,” says Cary Curtis, LESSG’s Vice Chair. “The clear choice was provided in the feasibility study and all participating agencies unanimously agreed and adopted resolutions to proceed with filing an application with the Plumas Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for the reorganization of one new FPD, Beckwourth Peak Fire Protection District,” states Curtis.

Currently, the four agencies provide services within confusing boundaries or respond to calls located outside of any of the four jurisdictions’ boundaries. By forming one FPD with clear boundaries, 911 dispatchers will no longer need to troubleshoot which agency to call for service and properties currently outside of any existing jurisdictions will be included.

“The majority of calls we receive are medical related,” comments Fire Chief Russell of Beckwourth FPD. “Response time is critical. By having one FPD receive the emergency call and then dispatch the closest EMS team will make a significant difference in expediting response time,” says Chief Russell.

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While the four agencies providing services will be dissolved, the existing six fire stations within the boundaries of the proposed FPD will be retained under the new FPD, including station buildings, equipment and vehicles.

In November 2023, registered voters within the proposed new FPD boundaries will vote on a 3-part ballot measure: 1) new FPD formation, 2) approval of a special tax, 3) election of Beckwourth Peak FPD Board members. The special tax would replace the existing special taxes and assessments used to fund community fire and protection services provided by the City of Portola and Beckwourth FD; Gold Mountain would retain a portion of or all of their special tax currently assessed. Sierra Valley FD has no current taxes levied. A tax sharing agreement with the County will also be explored, which means that any tax sharing revenue with the County will come out of property taxes already paid at no additional cost to property owners.

“We understand that the community has a lot of questions. We want to provide or explore answers to questions,” states Curtis. “We encourage the community to stay involved. Our website www.fireprotectplumas.org has a lot of educational material and an opportunity to join an email list. We will also be hosting community meetings throughout the upcoming months,” says Curtis.

For more information about the proposed Beckwourth Peak Fire Protection District, email plumasfirestudygroup@gmail.com or complete a contact form at www.fireprotectplumas.org/contact-us.

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