



## Kuna Rural Fire District

150 W Boise Street | PO Box 607 | Kuna, ID 83634  
(208) 922-1144 | [www.kunafire.com](http://www.kunafire.com) | [@KunaFire](https://www.facebook.com/KunaFire)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 8, 2022  
Contact: Chief T.J. Lawrence [chief@kunafire.com](mailto:chief@kunafire.com) 208-922-1144 ext. 2

#### **KRFD Board of Fire Commissioners to Consider Resolutions for Funding**

*Smaller operating levy increase and a facility bond reduces impacts to taxpayers*

Kuna, Idaho — The Board of Fire Commissioners for the Kuna Rural Fire District is considering an operating levy increase for additional firefighters and a bond to add a fire station. Fire commissioners, executive staff and Kuna firefighters have developed a plan to reduce the annual cost for taxpayers compared to what had been proposed.

The KRFD had tried to increase its operating levy by 60% in past elections to accomplish these projects. Voters turned down the proposal saying the cost was too much.

The new proposal reduces the annual cost from \$3.05 per \$100,000 of assessed value to \$2.65 per \$100,000 based on projected property values in 2023. Revenue would start being collected in 2024 based on state law.

There will be a public meeting in August where the Board will discuss both resolutions. The public is encouraged to attend and provide public comment. If the Board approves the resolutions, voters in the Fire District will vote on both measures during the November 8, 2022 General Election.

“These are real needs for our community, and we’ve figured out a way to get it done for less cost out-of-pocket for taxpayers,” said Chief T.J. Lawrence. “The bond will eventually be paid off, and property taxes will decrease for fire and EMS at that time.”

Emergency call volumes for the community have increased 72.42% in the past 10 years (17.3% in the last year alone). The population in the Fire District is projected to increase by 74% in the next 10 years. Overlapping calls – or emergencies that happen at the same time – are coming in 25% of the time and that number is expected to increase as the community grows.

Currently, there are times when the KRFD has no firefighters to respond. Chief Lawrence says that this will occur more often if the Fire District is unable to hire additional firefighters. If approved by voters, the operating levy increase would hire up to six additional emergency personnel to respond to higher call volumes.

The KRFD has just one station to serve almost 34,000 residents. The bond would fund a second fire station for the community to reduce emergency response times. Adequate facilities are as important as firefighters to saving lives and property. The KRFD has a Capital Improvement Plan to identify the number of stations and apparatus needed to serve the community as it grows.

The KRFD is able to charge “impact fees” for new development. However, impact fees can only be used for capital items, like fire stations, and that revenue is not enough to build a second station that the community requires.

“We save lives and property, so it’s awkward to say we need help – but we do. Staffing levels are not safe for our community or our firefighters. We also cannot effectively serve a community this size with one fire station,” said Chief Lawrence. “We are at the breaking point with all this growth, and our community needs to know that.”

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*The Kuna Rural Fire District (KRFD) provides fire suppression, life safety, and emergency medical services to 33,390 people across 110 square miles. Fifteen full-time firefighters responded to more than 2,007 calls in 2021 – a 72.42% increase compared to 10 years ago. EMS accounts for 63% of all calls, and overlapping calls occur 25% of the time. The agency operates under a balanced budget, is debt free, and has passed all its independent audits per state law.*