

Petras, Ginny@CALFIRE

From: rmackey411@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2015 11:19 PM
To: Petras, Ginny@CALFIRE
Subject: Letter to FDAC members
Attachments: To FDAC re 172 MAY 2015.pdf

Ginny,

Please forward the attached PDF file to the FDAC members PLUS yourself and Ian Larkin.

This is in response to the request for information made on April 20, 2015 by FDAC member John Willet.

The attachment is a copy of "Friends of Bonny Doon Fire" column that will appear in the June issue of the (Bonny Doon) Battle Mountain News, plus a bit of backstory.

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Thanks,

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FROM: Russ Mackey, Rmackey411@comcast.net May 28, 2015

TO: FDAC Members, Ian Larkin & Ginny Petras

VIA: Ginny, as requested by FDAC member John Willet

Dear FDAC Commissioners,

The following is forwarded to you in response to the request of Commissioner Willet at the April 20, 2015 FDAC meeting.

Friends has published a monthly column in our community newsletter, The Battle Mountain News, continuously since 2007. Every mailbox in Bonny Doon receives the newsletter. We bring fire news and views to the entire community. Our June column is traditionally devoted to the County Fire Budget. We cite official sources and provide links to public documents on our online Facebook page, allowing our readers easy access to background material.

We have covered Proposition 172 in detail a number of times over the years. We continue to believe that County Fire should receive a significant portion of 172 monies before a tax increase is considered.. As California voters, we received a number of promises about Prop 172 in the 1993 Official Ballot Pamphlet:

"guarantees that the money will go directly to counties and cities to be spent on sheriffs, police, fire protection, district attorneys, and jails." and,
"Guaranteeing funds for fire protection."

Those guarantees have not worked for Santa Cruz County Fire.

We regularly send a letter to each supervisor, setting forth our concerns about County Fire at budget time. We will do the same this year.

Since it appears likely that a poll will be taken for a tax increase for County Fire, this year we request that a new question be included in the inevitable Bregman survey. **See the July Friends article for the question we want asked of Bonny Doon & all county residents.**

Friends of Bonny Doon Fire

June 2015

A FIRE TAX INCREASE IN OUR FUTURE ?

The drought continues, fire season started early and the proposed County Fire budget for fiscal year 2015/16 begins," *The recommended budget provides for a \$10,817 decrease in revenue, a \$628,054 decrease in expenditures, and an increased reserve of \$1,563,112 resulting in an estimated zero fund balance as of June 30, 2016.*"

County staff describes the budget as having a long-term and challenging "structural deficit", is searching for ways to "supplement" fire funds and is seeking a long term funding "solution".

Significantly, the budget includes funding for (yet another) poll of the public to determine if a tax increase plan has any traction, and none of the County Supervisors are up for reelection in 2015/16.

BUDGET HEARINGS ARE ON CABLE AND THE INTERNET

All are welcome to attend the June 15 budget hearing in the Supervisor's Chambers at the county building. The meeting will air live on Comcast channel 26, and within a day or so be available on-line at CTV, Community TV of Santa Cruz. The proposed budget is available on-line at the County website.

COUNTY FIRE FUNDING WAS PROMISED YEARS AGO

The County has long recognized that one of the county's primary responsibilities is providing fire protection. However, the county continues to refuse to support County Fire with General Fund money, or to distribute a reasonable portion of the voter approved and already collected "Public safety Tax" (paid as a one-half percent sales tax) funds to County Fire.

These Proposition 172 funds total around Sixteen Million dollars per year - the Board of Supervisors allocates less than Eighty Thousand dollars to the fire service, Zero dollars to directly support County Fire. Calls by many parties to provide Prop 172 funding for County Fire have produced no result.

A QUESTION FOR THE INEVITABLE POLL

We request that the County add a first question to the coming poll. "Do you support allocation of not less than 15 percent of the existing Proposition 172 Public Safety Tax to County Fire?".

Funding County Fire does not have to be hard. It just needs to be fair.

For Friends, Russ Mackey and Steve Homan

Follow us on Facebook at Friends of Bonny Doon Fire for Links to items discussed