

NEW FIRE TRUCK IS ORDERED!

On March 16th, the Mescal-J6 Fire District held a public meeting to discuss truck specifics and loan details as required by the USDA Rural Development Funding Assistance Program.

A request for assistance was timely in that a June 26th deadline was looming to correct the ISO deficiency of not having the capacity to haul 4,000 gallons of water to a structure fire without relying on mutual aid responses. If the deadline was not met, the change in rating would mean higher home insurance.

Deputy Fire Chief Chris Bernal explained that the truck ordered from Truck Works will carry 3500 gallons of water with a 1250 GPM pump allowing the truck to answer calls independent of other vehicles as well as providing support to structural engines. The 10" quick dump on the rear will also be an important feature if the District has to provide water support to helicopter operations as was the case with the Cumero & Distillery Fires.

The Fire District Vehicle Committee ruled out other alternatives such as purchasing a 500 gallon truck or a 500 gallon tank on a truck due to safety issues and the importance of cutting down on the number of trips back to water sources to refill.

Tender cost and Financial Layout specifics include:

- Cost before taxes: \$149,939.00
- Tax on truck: \$12,444.94
- FET Tax waved because of District status
- Expected Cost: \$164,384.00
- Pre-approved loan amount: \$165,000 representing 100% financing
- Fire District will get \$10,000 deposit back from Truck Works for reserve fund
- 4.5% fixed interest rate
- No extra payment or pre-payment penalty
- Semi-annual payments due 45 days after tax revenue is released by Cochise County

NEW TENDER EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN MID-JUNE 2009 AND IS EXPECTED TO SERVICE THIS AREA FOR APPROX. 15 YEARS.

SUPERVISOR SEARLE VISITS WITH COMMUNITY

Supervisor Searle casually conversed with area residents at the recent CDO Quarterly Meeting held in March at the J-6 Community Bible Church.

Searle explained that the County was in a sound financial position thanks to his predecessors' planning.

Decreasing revenues have left the county with a \$3.1 million deficit but the County will use contingency funds rather than look at any layoffs.

A 10 % reduction in salaries will not be due to layoffs, but rather employees losing a few hours of pay in a few paychecks on a volunteer basis. In addition, the county has a hiring freeze on non-essential personnel with the Sheriff's Department being exempt.

Services have not been cut, although several satellite offices in Wilcox and Benson have been closed except thru appointments.

County roads will continue to be maintained but perhaps not as frequently.

Searle did suggest that residents review their 2010 Residential Notice of Value that will be arriving shortly. If there is any concern that one's property has been improperly valued, then begin the appeal process immediately. Waiting for the tax bill puts a property owner past the 60-day deadline for starting the appeal process.

The Envisioning Report was briefly discussed with Supervisor Searle confirming the Board's direction to Planning & Zoning to explore how the results can be implemented in upcoming revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and to consider if results warrant another look at the Comp Plan vision statement.

In the future, Searle foresees a need to increase the state tax on gasoline in order to keep up with the repairs and construction of road systems. The current rate is 18 cents per gallon and has not increased since the 1980's although the costs have gone up significantly.

Lastly, the audience was pleased to hear that recycling is finally coming to the Benson area in April!

Planning & Zoning Offices in Benson: Building permits need to be submitted by appointment only
Call (520) 432-9240 to schedule .
Benson appointments will be on Tuesdays.