



Jefferson County Fire & EMS
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Oregon State Legislature
Ways & Means Committee

RE: Support of Capitol Fund Request for Jefferson County Fire & Emergency Medical Services
(JCF & EMS) Building Expansion

Dear Senator Steiner, Representative Sanchez, and honorable committee members,

My name is Jeff Blake, Fire Chief from JCF & EMS, in Madras Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding our Capital Funding Request for JCF & EMS. We are requesting 2.5 million dollars to assist in the much-needed expansion and remodel of our older, existing Fire & EMS station.

The rural fire station was built in 1989, predominantly with volunteer staff that responded from home. In July of 2022, the Fire District and the EMS District combined operations to provide our growing community with more efficient and quality fire and emergency medical services. In 2022 our service calls were over 3,800 and projected to increase in 2023. The PNW depends on our vital infrastructure protected in our service area. Including, but not limited to; two major interstate highways with an average of 25,000 daily commuters, Lake Billy Chinook, which in the summer season sees over 750,000-day users annually, and the Madras Airport that support an ariel base camp for suppression of wildland fires.

This merger has significantly improved response times, and resource reliability, but due to our space constraints we have reached beyond the maximum capacity. Our daily station occupancy has increased by 460%. With the addition of personnel and to accommodate our diverse workforce (50 % male and 50% female) short term we added four dorm spaces in our existing living and kitchen area. Our bathroom facility space is inadequate for both our male and female firefighters. We have been utilizing the current training and public meeting space for offices and often moving logistics daily. Our ability to grow is limited until we can properly expand our building, we will continue to provide 24/7 advanced life support and fire suppression to our patrons.

The 2.5 million dollars we are asking will allow us to reach our goal and secure enough funding for the building expansion. In combination with a financing package from Business Oregon's Special Public Work Funding Program and due diligence with our budget, we can hopefully break ground in Fall 2023. Jefferson County is considered a disadvantaged community therefore unable to support a tax increase.

I appreciate your efforts and understand the many needs of Oregonians across the state. This will directly improve the lives and services we offer to not only Jefferson County residents but to all Oregonians and visitors.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Blake
Fire Chief
Jefferson County Fire & EMS