

January 23, 2025

To Oregon Ways and Means Committee:

Re: Jefferson County Fire & EMS District Building Expansion Capital Funding Request

I would ask for your support with the Capital Funding Request application submitted by Jefferson County Fire & EMS in Madras to upgrade and expand their main fire station. If this funding request is approved, it will provide the support needed to accomplish 22% of the project. The balance of the needed funding will be funded by the fire district.

The district headquarters is in the county seat of Jefferson County, serving the city of Madras, Culver, and Metolius but additionally serving areas 50+ miles north that include Antelope, Ashwood, Shaniko and the rural areas of SW Wasco County providing advanced life support medical services as requested.

The current building, which has been kept in excellent condition, was built 40 years ago. At that time our community was much smaller, the department did not have full-time staff and was 100% volunteer. Today the community is the 4th fastest growing County in Oregon based on the latest population statistics provided by Portland State University. The staff lives in the fire station 24/7 and responds to 3,600 calls per year with a diverse workforce.

The department has the highest percentage of females working in a fire department than nearly any other fire district in the nation. The importance of expanding the existing building to meet the needs of its workforce and the community cannot be overstated. They are limited on appropriate sleeping areas and facilities for both their men and women.

As a rural community dependent on agriculture as one of our key economic factors, that has been stressed due to water shortages. The last two years as example more that 50% of the farm ground has been left idle due to lack of water. If you have no water, and half the ground is fallow, there is not much additional income that can be sought.

People are flocking to Central Oregon to play, live and work in record numbers. This building is the only fire station on the north end of Central Oregon to serve the thousands of Oregonians that stream into Bend, Redmond, Prineville, Sunriver or Lake Billy Chinook daily. The ability to have a building that can house and allow an expanding workforce to work safely and provide emergency services to our locals, tourists and freight traffic that routinely use the norther Highway 97 corridor is critically important.

Please support funding for this project, if you have any questions, please contact me at 541-815-4380.



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