

Rock Community Fire Protection District

NO TAX-RATE INCREASE BOND ISSUE



Dear Residents,

I appreciate your interest in this letter and invite you to read it thoroughly to see how we're working to keep our community safe. As your Fire Chief, I'm responsible for ensuring our fire district has the resources to protect you, your loved ones, and our community. Above all, my primary goal is to ensure success in preventing emergencies before they happen. We must invest in critical infrastructure, equipment, and safety upgrades to accomplish this goal and maintain the reliable emergency services you expect and deserve.

Most importantly, we can achieve this without a tax rate increase.

On April 8, 2025, Rock Community Fire Protection District will ask voters to approve issuing general obligation bonds totaling \$20 million. **Proposition Safety** will be the first time the district has asked for voter approval of bonds since 2013. These bonds will be strategically issued in phases to replace aging fire trucks and critical life-saving equipment, keep up with technological advancements, construct a firefighter training and community safety education center, and reduce response times to 911 emergency calls. Each issuance may be outstanding for no longer than twenty years. As noted above, each issue **will be completed without a tax rate increase.**

Bonding authority requires voter approval to ensure transparency and community involvement in decision-making. These funds can only be used for capital improvements like those listed above. **These funds CANNOT be used for salaries, benefits, or operational expenses,** ensuring that every dollar is dedicated to long-term investments that improve the district's public safety and emergency response capabilities while keeping up with growth.

Phase One of this initiative, an estimated \$10 - \$12 million, will be issued in late 2025 and will focus on two critical areas:

✓ **Replace Aging Fire Apparatus**

For peak service, performance, and reduced maintenance costs, our fire trucks should follow a 20-year replacement cycle, with 15 years in frontline service and 5 years in reserve status. During their reserve period, these vehicles serve as backups, ensuring operational continuity when frontline trucks are out of service for repairs or maintenance.

- **A 2006 ladder truck and a 1998 fire engine** have reached the end of their service life. The combined replacement cost for these two trucks is over \$2.7 million.
- Newer, more reliable apparatus will improve response times, increase efficiency, reduce maintenance costs, and enhance firefighter and citizen safety.

✓ **Construct a Dedicated Firefighter Training and Community Safety Education Center**

Our fire district currently has no designated training facility. Firefighters are limited to practicing hands-on skills on a modest gravel lot behind one of our stations. Frequently, they must leave the district for mandatory training, which leads to gaps in coverage and longer response times to emergency calls. The proposed facility will be centrally located, offering a structured and controlled setting to improve firefighter training and deliver community safety and prevention education. This facility will be a community and regional resource and include:

- **Live Fire Training Center** – enables firefighters to master critical life-saving skills – fire suppression, victim search, vehicle and technical rescue, hazardous materials handling, and natural disaster response – under intense, realistic conditions with heat, smoke, and flames.
- **Emergency Medical Training Lab** – simulate medical, trauma, and mass-casualty emergencies to enhance medical capabilities and life-saving skills.
- **Community Safety Education Center** – a modern, fully equipped, and interactive classroom for delivering age-appropriate life-saving training and hazard prevention education to both children and adults

Future Phases will support strategic investments to ensure that your fire department remains ready, responsive, and well-equipped to meet your needs and the needs of our community.

Bonds will be issued in future phases only as needed, with funding allocated to support:

- **Maintaining the 20-year fire truck replacement schedule through 2036. (\$5.8 million)**
- **Replacing firefighter safety gear. (\$750,000)**
- **Replacing communication systems/radios. (\$650,000)**
- **Firefighter Breathing Air Systems (\$650,000)**
- **Replacing critical life-saving equipment, rescue/extrication tools, and cardiac monitors/defibrillators. (\$800,000)**
- **Maintaining facilities.**
- **Keeping pace with emerging technology.**

I am committed to delivering accurate information while upholding transparency in the Rock Community Fire Protection District. I invite residents to call me or stop by anytime to review the district's finances, ask questions, and see how their tax dollars are managed.

Please join me on March 26, at 6:30 p.m. or March 29, at 9:00 a.m., at the district's headquarters, 3749 Telegraph Road, Arnold, MO 63010, to ask questions and further discuss Proposition Safety.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.rockfire-rescue.org/propsafety>

Thank you for your time, and as always, stay safe,



Kevin Wingbermuehle
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