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Saving a buck is nice when times are tight. Saving a million bucks is cause for celebration. The St. Charles and Countryside Fire Protection District says it is likely to get a land donation for the district's proposed west-side fire station. The parcel -- which could be as large as 2 acres -- is west of the city on Route 64 just east of LaFox and Burlington roads.

"We've had informal and then some formal discussions over the last six months," Ed Malek, district president, said. Central Development Corp. is making the donation.

On April 7, residents will vote on two referendums, asking for permission to sell bonds and to raise property taxes by 14 cents per \$100 of assessed value -- an increase of about \$13 a month on a \$350,000 home. The money would be used to finance the construction of the new station and cut down on what many residents and officials have called unacceptably long response times. The 34-square-mile district serves residents in several nearby communities and unincorporated areas.

Malek said the site for the new station borders a commercial area, so there are no nearby residents who potentially would be disturbed by flashing lights and blaring sirens. It is within the Wasco Sanitary District, so there would be a water source ready and waiting when firefighters move in.

If the project comes to fruition, Central Development also will manage construction at the site for a flat fee and will handle infrastructure improvements at no cost to the district, according to a news release.

Officials still are discussing construction of the second fire station, on the district's east side, Malek added.

Even if the April referendum fails, the district still would like to secure the site, Malek said.