

Developer offers 2-acre site for fire station

By BETHANY KRAJELIS – Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES – A new fire station will be built in Campton Township if voters in the St. Charles Countryside Fire Protection District approve referendums in April.

The district's board last month approved the placement of two referendum questions on the April ballot. One will ask voters' permission to issue \$2 million in bonds to build the station; the other seeks approval to increase the district's tax rate to fund its operations.

And this week, the board announced that Central Development Corporation offered to donate 2 acres of property on Route 64, just east of La Fox and Burlington roads in Campton Township.

If the referendums are approved, the 20,000-plus residents in the 34-square-mile fire district, which includes Campton, St. Charles and Wayne townships, would see an increase on their property tax bills. The owner of a home valued at \$350,000 would pay about \$13 more a month, or \$156 more a year.

"We're really excited about the location," said Ed Malek, the district's president. "It's adjacent to a commercial area, tied into the Wasco Sanitary District and has terrific access, being on Route 64."

The corporation, which owns the Campton Square development, would manage construction of the new fire station, Malek said. The same developer receives monthly rent from the Village of Campton Hills for its village hall and police department.

Malek said the donated land would save the district an estimated \$1 million, which he said is the minimum cost to buy other property. It also confirms the district's statement that it would not build a new station on its Burlington Road property, Malek said.

That property, which was previously purchased for about \$400,000 and is in a residential area, would be sold once the housing market is more stable, Malek said. The land on Route 64 is near the Fox Mill subdivision, but Malek said that with a track of open space and added landscaping, the station would not negatively affect residents.

Discussions over the need for a new station – and unsuccessful referendums – have been taking place for years. Malek said the district decided to take the issue to referendum after a phone survey showed that the district is not meeting residents' expectations on response times.

The average response time of the district, which contracts with the St. Charles Fire Department for its three fire stations, equipment, staff and services, is about 11 minutes. Malek said that time could be improved with the addition of a fourth fire station on the district's west side.

Details of the referendum questions and the district's survey results can be found on the St. Charles Countryside Fire Protection District Web site, www.sccfpd.org.