

## **St. Charles Countryside fire district asks for \$2 million**

[By James Fuller](#) | Daily Herald Staff

It will cost about \$13 a month more in property taxes for the average homeowner in the St. Charles Countryside Fire Protection District to receive speedier service.

That's the total potential impact of a tax increase question district trustees will place on April ballots. If approved, the district will issue \$2 million in bonds and have enough new money to hire more firefighters.

There will be two questions on the April ballot. One asks for permission and money to build a firehouse in an undetermined spot in the far western portion of the district. The other question asks for an operating tax rate increase to hire new firefighters to staff the firehouse. Trustees believe proper budgeting will allow the district to build another new facility in the eastern area of the district at a later date with no additional tax increase.

The \$13 per month impact relates to what the owner of a \$350,000 home would pay in new property taxes to the district to accomplish all of that. That translates into \$156 a year.

The owner of a \$1 million home would pay \$38 per month or \$456 per year in additional taxes.

"For the cost of going to the movies and a fast food meal, residents in the district would get the lowered emergency and fire protection response times they are asking for and are entitled to," District President Ed Malek said. "Even in these economic times it's affordable and, bottom line, it's necessary."

Response times to fire and ambulance calls in the district can sometimes top 11 minutes. That's well beyond the time a flash fire can cause a total loss of property or a heart attack can result in death. The new firehouse would cut that response time to an average of about six minutes.

The fire district serves a 34-square mile territory of unincorporated St. Charles, Elgin, South Elgin, Bartlett, Elburn, West Chicago and Campton Hills. There are more than 6,600 homes in the district.