

# St. Charles area fire district to hold referendums

## • Cost of quicker response: \$2 million in bonds, 14-cent tax hike

Aurora Beacon News January 20, 2009

By [STEVE LORD slord@scn1.com](mailto:slord@scn1.com)

ST. CHARLES -- The Fire Protection District that serves the villages of Wayne and Campton Hills -- as well as parts of the Elburn area and a lot of unincorporated territory in Kane and DuPage counties -- will ask voters for money to build and equip a new fire station.

The St. Charles Countryside Fire Protection District Board will put two referendums on the April 9 local election ballot. One question will ask for up to \$2 million in bonds to build the new station, and another will ask for tax rate increase of 14 cents to equip the new station.

The board slated the referendums after 90 percent of 600 homeowners in the district answered in a survey that the new station is needed to cut down on fire crews' response time to calls.

The district encompasses about 34 square miles roughly bordered by Silver Glen Road on the north, just east of Route 47 on the west, Route 38 on the south and Munger Road in DuPage County on the east. It covers St. Charles, Campton and Wayne townships.

The district does not include the city of St. Charles, which has its own fire department. But the district contracts with the city fire department to provide firefighting and emergency ambulance service. That means the district's calls are dispatched out of the three St. Charles fire stations.

That situation has resulted in longer emergency response times to parts of the district, some as long as 11 to 13 minutes. Board members have deemed that too long when trying to stop a fire from reaching its flashpoint, or to help a victim of cardiac arrest.

According to district board members, the new station, equipment and services would require a 2.5 percent increase to a homeowner's overall tax bill, from the current 18 cents to 32 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

That would be an additional \$13 a month in property taxes for a \$350,000 home, district board member said.

"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," said Ed Malek, district board president. "Even in these economic times, it's affordable and bottom line, it's necessary."

Board members said they are seeking grants or other money that could reduce the cost of a new fire station. A variety of information is available on the district's Web site, [www.sccfpd.org](http://www.sccfpd.org), and they are planning open houses to gather input from homeowners, businesses and leaders within the community