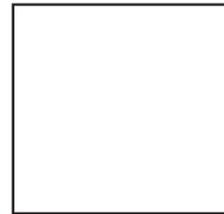




**Nederland Fire
Protection District**
PO Box 155,
Nederland CO 80466



Community Update



Nederland Fire Protection District (NFPD) protects the health and safety of the 4,500 residents living in the district's 56-square-mile area. The department depends on its dedicated staff of professional and volunteer firefighters to carry out its mission.

Please Open: COMMUNITY SURVEY INSIDE and important information about Nederland Fire Protection District

Your input will help shape how NFPD will move forward

The Nederland Fire Protection District Board of Directors is considering placing a mill-levy and bond question on the November 2022 ballot. The board will use the information gathered as part of this community opinion survey—as well as other public input—to decide whether to place the tax question on the ballot.

Quick survey about NFPD

Please take a few minutes to fill out the included survey and comment on the proposal. Consider this a town hall meeting around your kitchen table. The survey should take only a few minutes to complete and can be found online at the address below.

Questions and Comments

If you have questions about Nederland Fire Protection District and the district's budget, please contact:

Iain Irwin-Powell, Board Chair and President
719 581 9304
boardpres@nfpd.org

NFPD Board of Directors

The Nederland Fire Protection District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors who oversees the budget and policy decisions made within the district.

Iain Irwin-Powell, President/Chair
boardpres@nfpd.org

Guy Falsetti, Vice President
boardvp@nfpd.org

Todd Wieseler, Treasurer
boardtreasurer@nfpd.org

Jess McElvain, Director
jess.mcelvain@nfpd.org

Russ Panneton, Director
russ.panneton@nfpd.org

Nederland Fire Protection District considering tax question to fund equipment and maintenance needs

Your fire department, Nederland Fire Protection District (NFPD), protects the health and safety of the 4,500 residents living in the department's 56-square-mile district. This area, which includes the towns of Nederland and Eldora a vast area of public lands, has about \$1 billion worth of residential and commercial property.

NFPD responds to more than 400 emergency calls each year. NFPD is an all-hazards department, responding to medical calls, motor-vehicle accidents, backcountry rescue and, of course, structure and wildland fires.

Personnel and volunteer training and equipment

The department is mostly volunteer, with eight paid staff, including Fire Chief Michael Scott and three captains/paramedics. The department relies on volunteer officers and firefighters for much of its emergency staffing needs. Doing this keeps operational budgets lower, but requires a significant amount of training and equipment.

NFPD needs 20 fully trained and equipped volunteers to be ready to respond to emergency calls. Like any organization with volunteers, there's a lot of



- ▶ Visit NFPD.org for additional project information
- ▶ Take NFPD survey at bit.ly/NFPDsurvey

turnover—and that impacts the department's budget. That includes \$5,500 for wildland and structure fire PPE and \$4,500 in training.

Equipment and facility maintenance

State and federal safety standards require continual updates to PPE and other safety equipment for first responders to ensure the safest working environment for our staff.

In addition to firefighter equipment, NFPD's fleet of emergency vehicles is aging, making each vehicle very expensive to maintain. The department's primary engine was purchased in 1998, and the newest firefighting vehicle was purchased in 2005. These vehicles are not used everyday, but when called upon in an emergency, they must do their jobs. Varying road conditions put immense strain on these vehicles, and the weather puts significant stress on pumps and water systems.

Several of the department's vehicles are custom built. Parts are hard to find, and repairs take months to

Visit bit.ly/NFPDsurvey to complete this Community Opinion Survey

Proposal includes ambulance and wildland equipment

complete. During that time, a vehicle is out of service, putting stress on the remaining vehicles in the fleet.

Over the past four years, NFPD spent more than \$40,000 on repairs to the primary response fire engine. In 2021, that engine spent three months out of service for a rear axle repair. Also last year, the district's ambulance suffered a catastrophic electrical failure, causing a significant accident. The ambulance was repaired and put back into service.

The age of these vehicles also means that they do not have safety features found on newer vehicles, such as crush-proof cabs, supplemental airbag systems and anti-lock braking systems. This places our firefighters—both career and volunteer—in danger before we even reach the emergency call destination. According to the National Fire Protection Association, vehicle-related accidents are one of the largest causes of death for firefighters and first responders, including volunteers.

NFPD's stations also require ongoing repairs. Most of that comes from the current operating budget, but over the past two years the main fire station has required repairs that outstripped the district's facility maintenance budget.

Replacement costs for key emergency equipment:

Brush truck:
\$180,000



Ambulance:
\$300,000



Fire engine: \$890,000



Replacement of emergency vehicles

Replacing older vehicles with new equipment is the only viable solution. NFPD needs to begin a vehicle-replacement program. The top priorities are replacement of the primary fire engine, which takes about two years from order to delivery, making the current engine over 26 years old if we replaced it today, and the other immediate need is a new ambulance. A secondary need is replacing the wildland brush trucks, a critical piece of equipment as wildfires become more prevalent in this region. The oldest brush truck was built in 1994 and is virtually undrivable.

A properly funded vehicle-replacement program will allow the district to plan for replacement all of its vehicles over the next 20 years, and then schedule

ongoing replacements—instead of spending extra dollars patching together obsolete equipment. This will then free up money in the operational budget to address training, firefighter PPE and safety equipment, and building maintenance needs.

Reducing risk for the community

Properly maintained firefighting equipment, and a well-trained staff, allows NFPD to protect lives and property in our community. If the department's equipment fails at a critical moment, those same lives and properties can be put into even more danger.

If NFPD does not have either the equipment or staffing available to respond to an emergency call, our neighboring districts will respond—but help can be a long time coming. A fire response by another department can take up to 30 minutes and a medical call can be 45 to 60 minutes away.

Increased wildfire concerns are making it harder to insure property in this area. Without insurance, we cannot have homes and mortgages, and we will no longer have our community. A well-equipped and trained fire department is part of setting insurance rates and reducing risk. Its NFPD's responsibility to help manage the safety and risk needs of this community so that our residents and local businesses can thrive here.

2022 mill-levy proposal

The NFPD Board of Directors is considering asking district voters to approve a property-tax increase for a Fire Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance Fund. The proposal would be a new, 3-mill property tax that would provide about \$250,000 annually, after being phased in during a three-year period.

This measure will allow the district to better protect our residents, homes and businesses. It will better protect our firefighters and first responders who deserve equipment and vehicles they can rely on. It will also allow NFPD to more successfully pursue state and federal grants by having matching funds available for the purchase of new equipment.

If approved by voters, the Fire Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance Fund is estimated to cost the median priced home—about \$750,000 for the Nederland area—approximately \$160 per year, less than \$14 per month, when fully implemented. The fund would be in addition to the district's current mill levy of 14.925 mills. It would not be used for staffing or administration and would be subject to annual audit and review for the public.

Community Opinion Survey

Please take a few minutes to read the questions below, review with other household members, and complete the survey. All surveys are anonymous and your response will in no way be associated with your name. To take this survey, please do one of the following by July 29, 2022:

- Take this survey online at bit.ly/NFPDSurvey
- Drop off at the main fire station at 650 West 4th Street, Nederland 80466
- Email the survey to survey@nederlandfire.org

Q1. In general, how would you rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest, the job that Nederland Fire Protection District does protecting the community and providing emergency medical and firefighting services? (Please check one)

1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Q2. In your opinion, should NFPD's efforts to purchase new, reliable firefighting equipment be a high, medium or low priority, or not a priority at all? (Please check one)

High priority Medium priority
 Low priority Not a priority
 Don't know/No opinion

Q3. Should NFPD's efforts to maintain its existing and future firefighting equipment be a high, medium or low priority, or not a priority at all? (Please check one)

High priority Medium priority
 Low priority Not a priority
 Don't know/No opinion

Q4. Please select a statement below that most closely represents your opinion of NFPD's proposed mill-levy request: (Please check one)

- NFPD needs to address the challenges presented by its aging vehicle fleet, equipment needs and training requirements.
- NFPD should tighten its belt and find ways to maintain its equipment and provide services within the current budget.
- Other, please explain:

Q5. If an election were held today, would you vote "yes" in favor, or "no" to oppose, the following potential question:

Shall Nederland Fire Protection District taxes be increased by up to \$250,000 (2024 amount after all phased-in increases) annually and in each year thereafter by whatever additional amounts are raised from a phased-in operating mill levy imposed at a rate of 1 mill in 2022, an additional 1 mill in 2023, and an

additional 1 mill in 2024 (the total of which is 3 mills and is in addition to the mill levy currently imposed by the district), and continuing thereafter as provided by law, with such tax proceeds to be used for the following district operational and capital expenses:

- Funding of a structured vehicle replacement plan;
- Funding of vehicle maintenance and replacement; and
- Funding of building maintenance and construction?

Yes No Don't Know

Q6. If NFPD puts a funding question on the ballot, please rank on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest, which elements are most important to your possible support?

Fire engine replacement
1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

New ambulance
1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Firefighter safety gear and emergency equipment
1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Wildland fire brush trucks
1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Maintenance of current and new equipment
1 2 3 4 5 Unsure

Q7. What are your concerns, if any, regarding this tax proposal for fire equipment and maintenance, as well as any comments about the district?

Q8. I have been a resident of the district for ____ years.

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