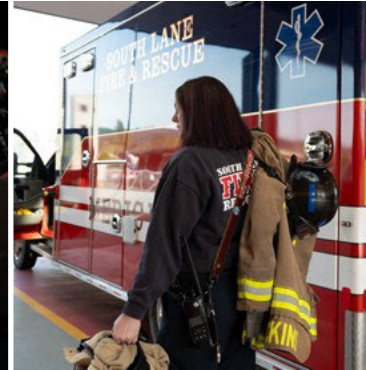




SOUTH LANE COUNTY
FIRE & RESCUE

PROPOSED
LEVY 2026

MEASURE #20-383



South Lane County Fire & Rescue Levy Measure 20-383

In the May 2026 election, South Lane County Fire & Rescue District will ask voters for a five-year local option levy to add critically needed response capacity funding for fire and emergency medical services.

South Lane County Fire & Rescue is a Special District which is a fire protection district that exists in the state of Oregon and is an independent local government agency and **not part of a local city or county government**. The District's funding revenue mainly consists of local property taxes supplemented by a small amount of ambulance revenue.

South Lane Fire District has a permanent tax rate of \$1.03 per \$1,000 of assessed value. *Note: Assessed value (AV) is the value used to calculate property tax. It is shown on the property tax statement. It is NOT the same as real market value (RMV), which is the market price of the home.* Currently, South Lane Fire District relies heavily on a Local Option Levy at the rate of \$0.47 per \$1,000 to fund emergency operations in addition to the permanent tax rate. This levy rate was set in 2012 and has remained unchanged since. This levy rate is no longer sufficient to maintain operations. A Levy rate of \$0.94 per \$1,000 of assessed value will ensure that we can do the following:

- Add critically needed response capacity.
- Offset inflationary cost increases for operations
- Add 3 to 6 additional Firefighter/Paramedics to address increasing call volume.
- Keep pace with the growth of the cities, Cottage Grove and Creswell, and prepare for the needs of our citizens now and into the future.



Fire Levy Information

The proposed levy rate is the lowest amount South Lane Fire District could ask for to meet the increased service demand for until 2031. There are several contributing factors to the new proposed levy rate of \$0.94 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

- The current levy rate has not increased since 2012. The District has been working with the same funding rate set over a decade ago.
- The increase in 911 calls have outpaced the ability to provide Fire and EMS services.
- With a 62% increase in call volume since 2014. The District is now unable to staff a fire engine as needed for response due to overlapping ambulance calls 80% of the time.
- Between now and 2031, the call volume is anticipated to increase from 14.3 calls per day to 18.6 calls per day.

The new amount requested from voters will be \$0.94 cents per \$1,000 assessed value (a \$0.47 cent increase). The estimated impact should cost the average property owner around \$7.78 a month more than the current levy for a total of \$15.56 a month. Without the levy increase, in order to staff for fire response, the Fire District will have to significantly cut EMS response services, causing extended wait time for emergency response resources to arrive. Potential cuts include the FireMed program, non-emergency services such as lift assists for falls, evaluations after fall, fire prevention services, community event standbys and other programs and activities.

Increased Call Volume

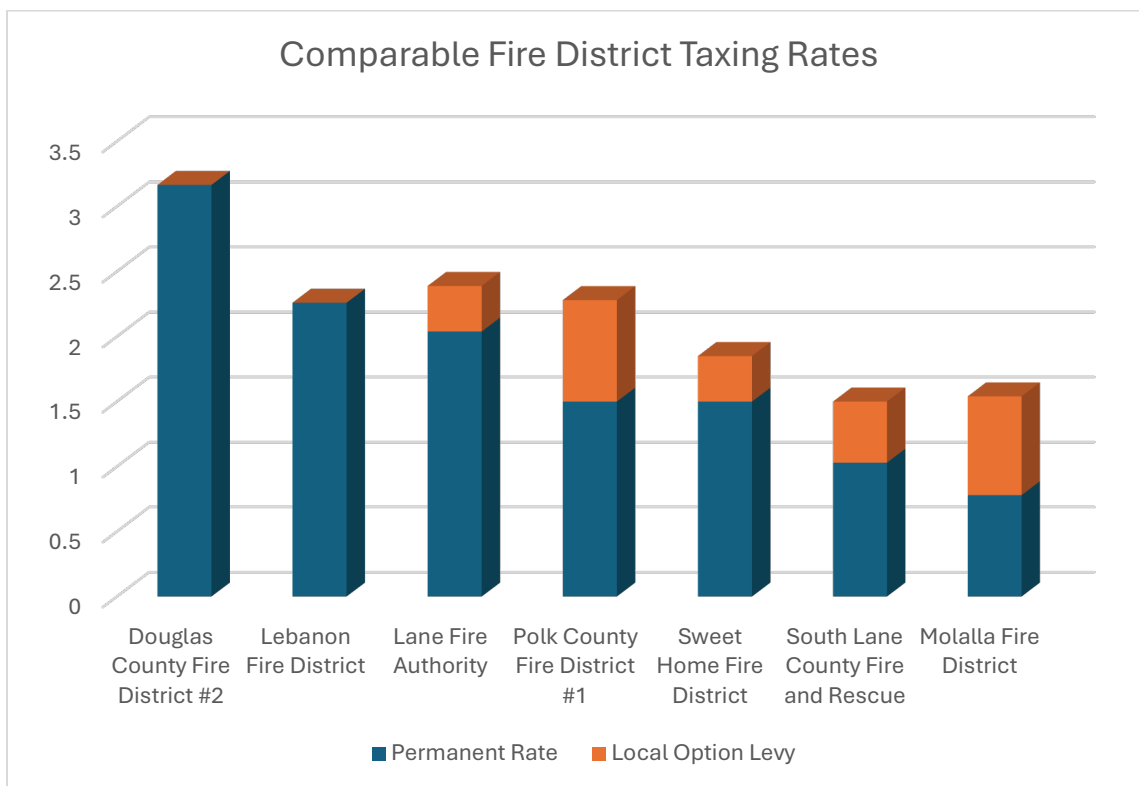
In 2012, South Lane voters approved a local levy at the rate of \$0.47 per \$1,000 of assessed property value and the call volume average was 9 calls per day. Voters approved a renewal of this levy in 2017 with an average of 10.7 calls per day and again in 2022 which increased again to 14.5 calls per day. In the 10 years since the last levy rate adjustment, emergency calls have increased 62%.

In 2025, South Lane Fire had 5231 requests for service which is an average of 14.3 incidents per day. Of the requests for service, 80% of the time there were overlapping calls, meaning more than one request for service at the same time.



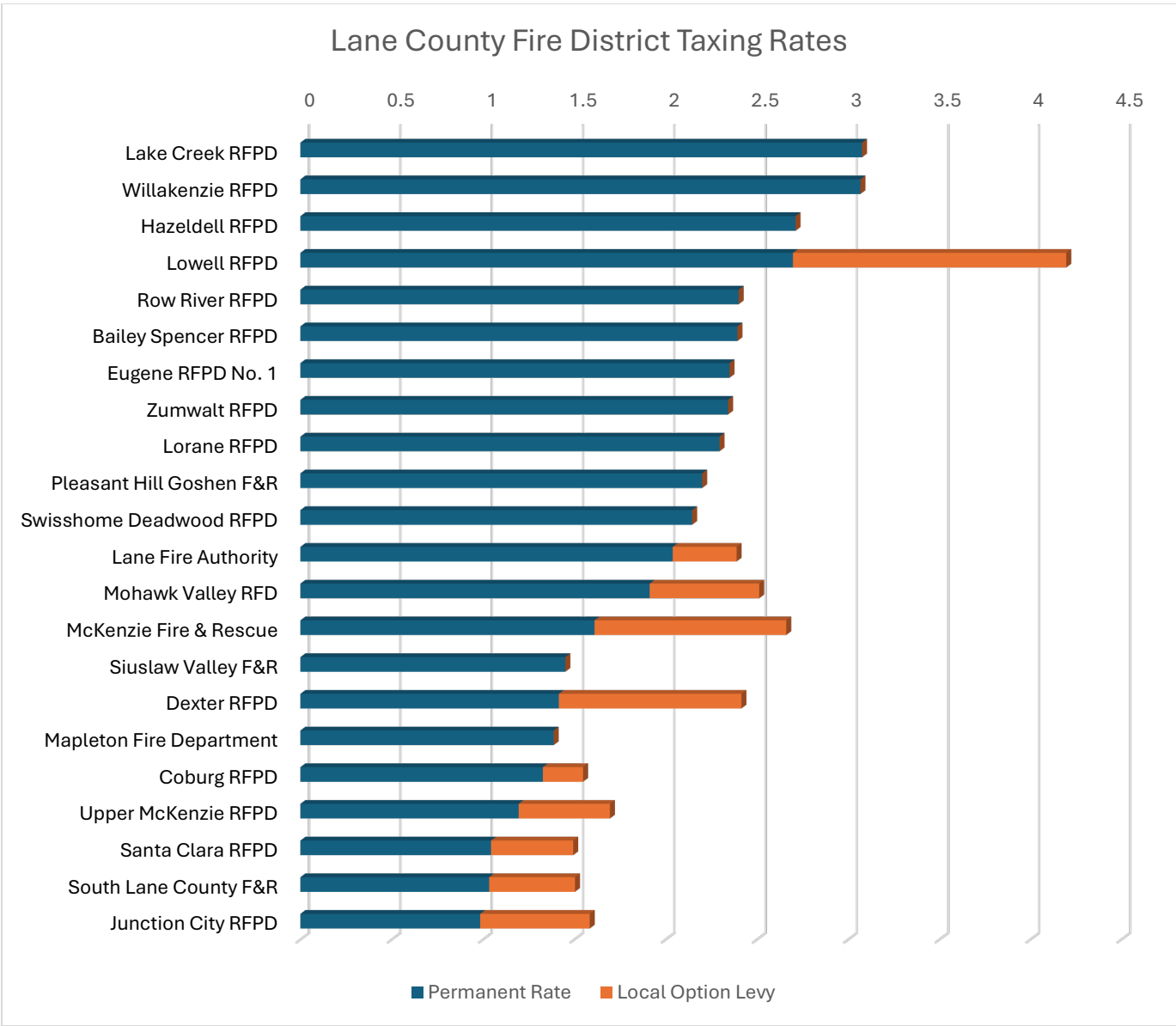
Permanent Tax Rate Funding

The passage of Measure 50 in May 1997 brought about major changes to Oregon's property tax system. Each district had a permanent property tax rate established from Measure 50. In 2003, when South Lane County Fire and Rescue was formed, the permanent tax rate was set at \$1.0339.



South Lane Fire District uses comparable fire agencies in the State of Oregon as a basis for wages, benefits and contract negotiation. Of these 7 comparable agencies, South Lane Fire has the second lowest permanent tax rate at \$1.03, with the next lowest being Sweet Home Fire at \$1.50, and the highest being Douglas County Fire District #2 at \$3.16.

In reference to the local area, we look at other Lane County Fire Districts. Of the 22 Districts throughout Lane County, South Lane Fire is the second lowest permanent tax rate.



Increased Costs

Since the last levy renewal, we have endured the end of the pandemic, record inflation, and rising costs of fuel, medical supplies, and supply chain shortages.

The current levy rate has not changed since 2012. South Lane Fire District has been attempting to keep up with a 62% increase in call volume and ever-increasing expenses with a levy amount from over a decade ago. Due to state tax regulations, South Lane Fire District's permanent tax rate cannot be increased to meet the demand for services. South Lane Fire District has experienced a 40% increase in cost of medical supplies over the last 5 years. These supplies are essential equipment used on emergency calls.

Costs are outpacing the increases in funding.

- Annual operating cost increase – 7%
- Annual operating revenues increase – 3.25%

Revenue is primarily property tax which is constrained by total assessed value of the primary structure and 5 acres.

New Construction

Oregon **State Measures 5 and 50** are really the key as to why local governments in Oregon aren't receiving enough operating funding from property taxes, and why organizations like South Lane Fire District have to ask voters to approve bonds and levies.

If you live in South Lane County, it's obvious that the community is experiencing growth. New homes and apartment complexes are being built throughout our community. These homes and apartments (or any homes built after Measures 5 and 50 were put in place in the 90s) do contribute to the overall tax base, but due to these measures, housing is assessed at a rate much lower than market value, and the assessed value is what property taxes are based on. This is because when Measures 5 and 50 were put in place, tax assessed value of properties were capped to only grow 3% each year.

So, what does this have to do with new construction? The rate for new housing is based on the assessed value of comparable houses in the area. This means that increasing market value, even of new construction, does not result in an equal increase to tax revenue, resulting in a need to seek additional operating funds from the voters in the form of levies to provide services.