**LUCERNE VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (LVEDA)**

**PROPOSAL TO HELP COUNTY FIRE LIVE WITHIN ITS MEANS**

The following list contains suggestions and ideas that, if implemented, may help the County of San Bernardino provide reasonable fire safety services at a value cost. The foundational values on which these suggestions rest consist of the following:

* Government at all levels shall live within its means,
* The means by which San Bernardino County shall govern is via the property and sales tax only,
* San Bernardino County shall not impose special taxes or fees without the consent of two-thirds of the voters effected by the special tax or fee.

1. County Fire funded entirely and directly through the County General Fund via 1) property tax, 2) via contract agreements with municipalities.
2. Revenue generated in a community is totally allocated to the Fire/Paramedic station(s) and services in said community.
3. Leave the option of FP-5 fire tax districts for wealthier communities that, via a two-thirds majority, vote to pay for increased levels of service. (But, DON'T coerce other residents by cutting back on baseline, bare-bones service).
4. Determine if there is there a legal and safe way for EMS (emergency medical services) ambulances to roll to a location without fire trucks.
5. In the vicinity of municipalities, determine if County Fire responsibility be transferred to the fire department of that city which might be more cheaply reimbursed than by maintaining a nearby County Fire station for unincorporated lands just outside the city?
6. Options for city ambulances providing EMS services to adjacent and nearby unincorporated County residents.
7. In more remote areas, maintain County fire stations to provide both fire and EMS services, but improved through County initiated efficiencies.
8. In remote areas - determine Level and type of current services - negotiable with an emphasis on free-market solutions to both fire and EMS services.
9. Recommend what response times should be acceptable with distance from fire stations and EMS service providers being key to those targets.
10. Establish tax levels based on a parcel's potential demand for services, including number of buildings on a parcel, distance from other structures, whether a parcel is in a high fire potential SRA (State Responsibility Area) or not, distance from a fire station to determine whether help could arrive in time (why should citizens pay for something from which they will not benefit?)
11. Use fire insurance data to determine likelihood of success getting to a fire/medical event in time.
12. What tax structures do other financially solvent counties have?
13. Consolidation of contiguous parcels (only for Fire tax purposes) should still be available for single rates.
14. Reduced tax rates in State-designated "(Economically) Disadvantaged Communities" where low income residents are just trying to survive economically.
15. Complete an analysis of the County General Fund's ability to continue subsidizing County Fire.
16. BOS (or contractor) conduct a review/audit of County Fire Dept. employees’ retirement system – compensation –Fund balance and investment policy – retirement age – etc.

Chuck Bell and Bill Lembright – LVEDA – 760 964 3118