



CITY OF BEND

Bend Fire & Rescue Proposed Local Option Fire Levy

**Todd Riley
Fire Chief**

May 2023 Election

Why Has This Measure Been Referred to the Ballot?

In the May 2023 election, voters will have the opportunity to consider a five-year local option levy which would provide funding for fire and emergency medical services. If the measure passes, it would cost property owners \$0.76 per \$1000 of assessed property value.



What is a local option levy?

Proposed 5-Year Local Option Levy

- Also known as an operating levy.
- A levy is a funding option is placed on the ballot for voter consideration.
- It is a tax with a rate that is determined by a property owner's taxable assessed value of their structures and land.
- Levies can last for up to five years before expiration, after which a new levy can be submitted to voters for consideration.
- If the measure passes, Bend Fire & Rescue would use the levy funding to support staffing and expenses related to staffing such as equipment and training.



Existing Levy Funding

- In 2014, Bend area voters passed a levy of \$0.20 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed property value.
- Voters passed the current levy in 2018 at the same rate.
- The current levy expires in June 2024.

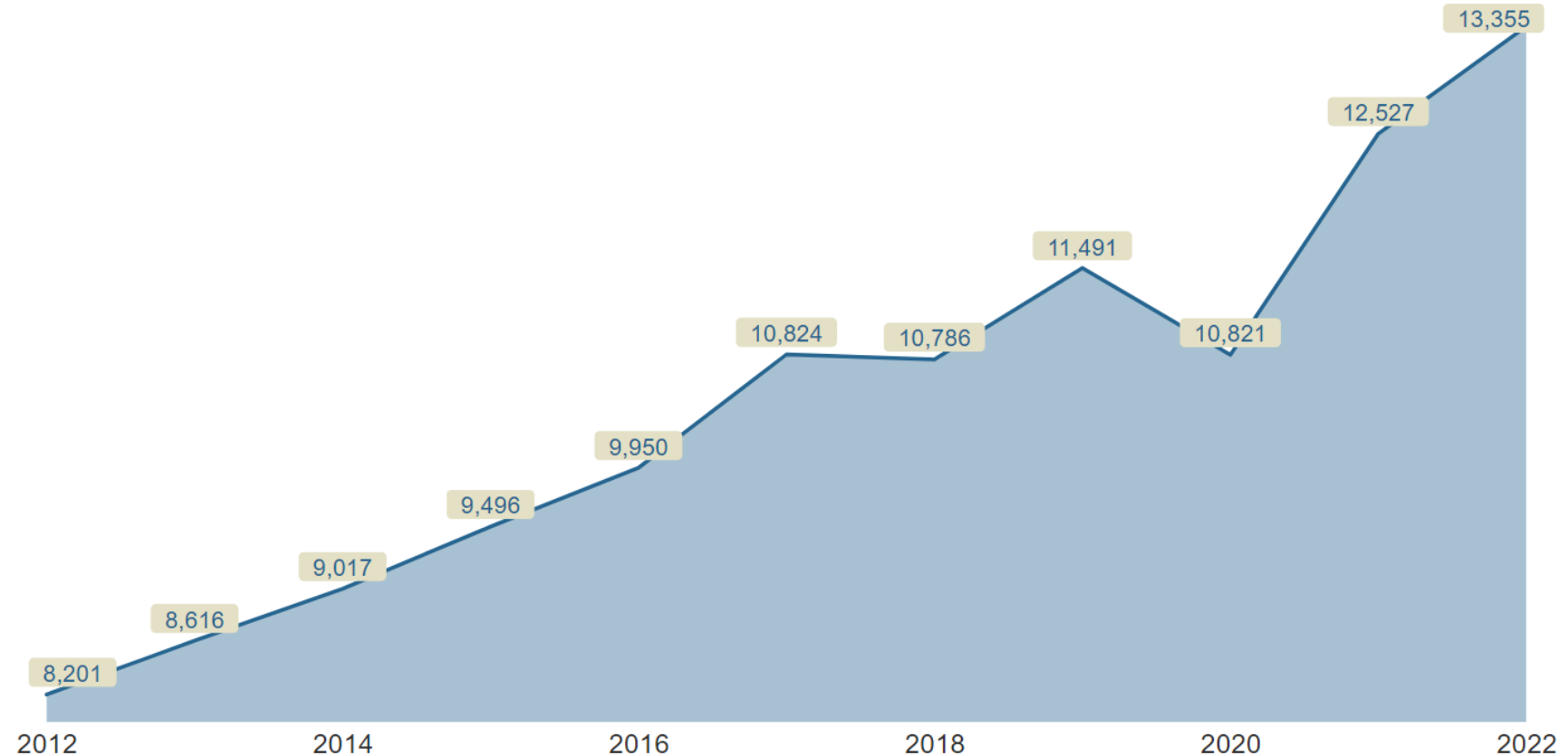


**Why is a new levy being proposed
to voters?**

Growing Call Volume

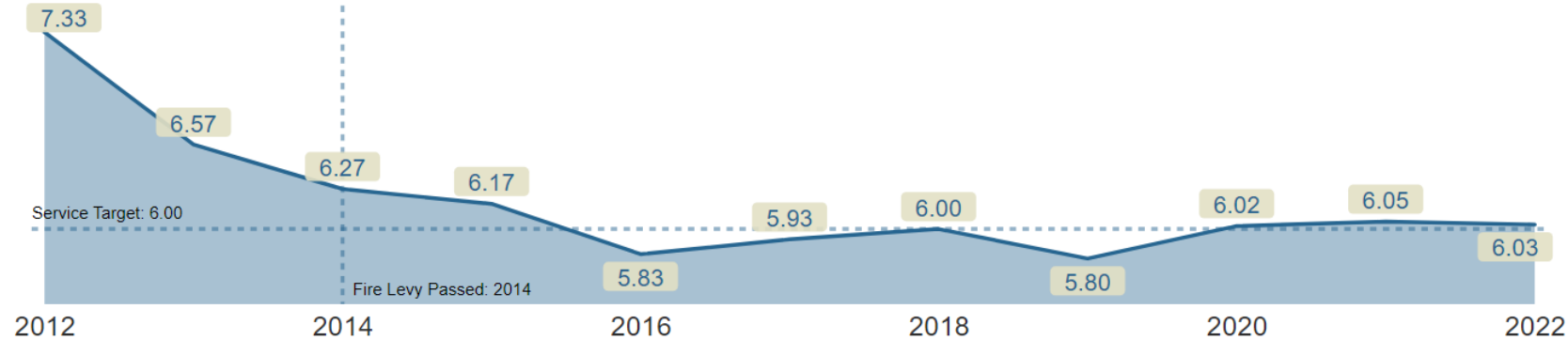
- More people coming to Bend means more calls for Bend Fire & Rescue.
- Since 2014, Bend Fire & Rescue's call volume has grown over 60% and is expected to increase another 38% by 2029.

Annual Call Volume (EMS and Fire)

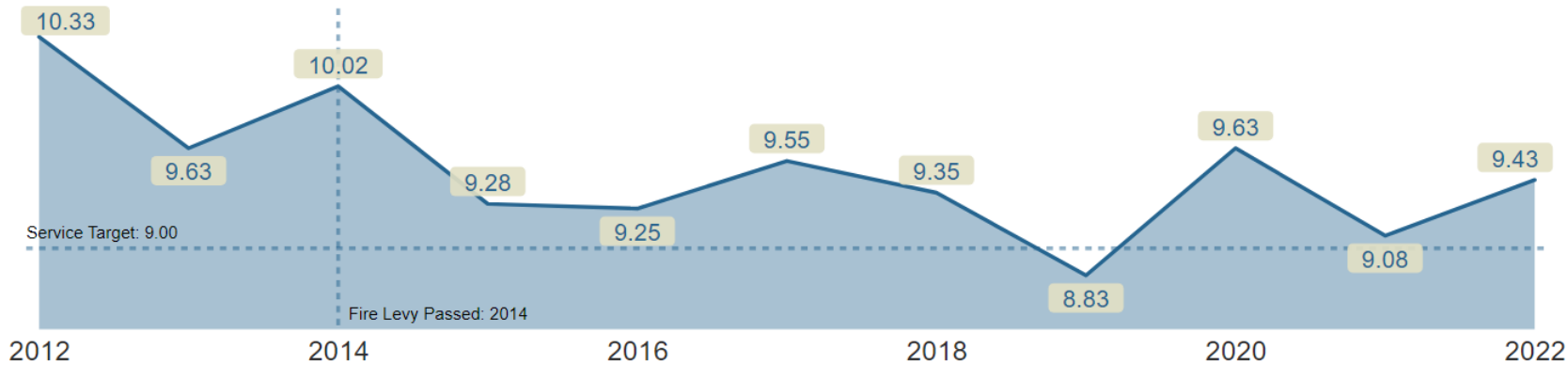


Increasing Response Times

Average Response Time (minutes) for City of Bend



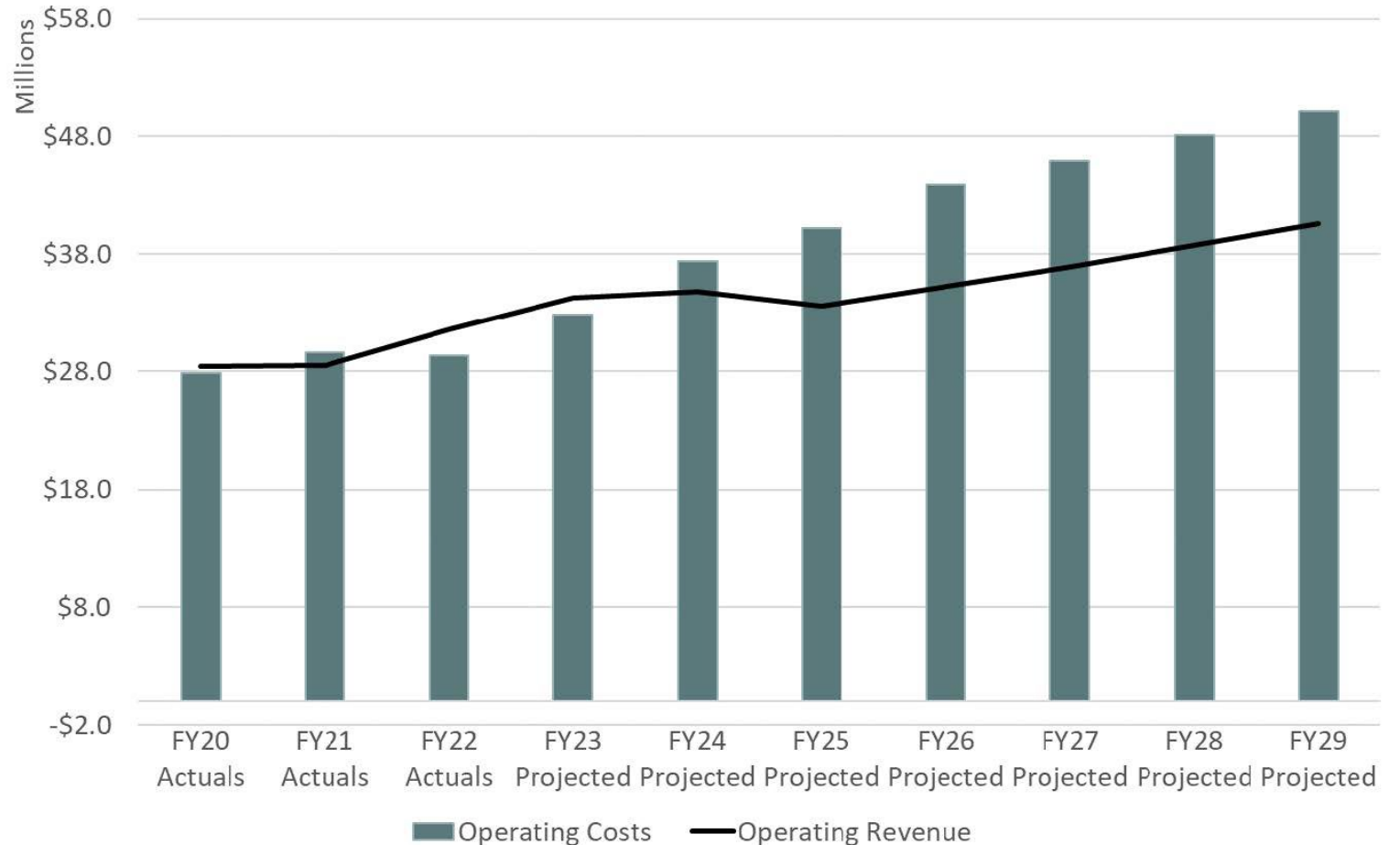
Average Response Time (minutes) for Rural District



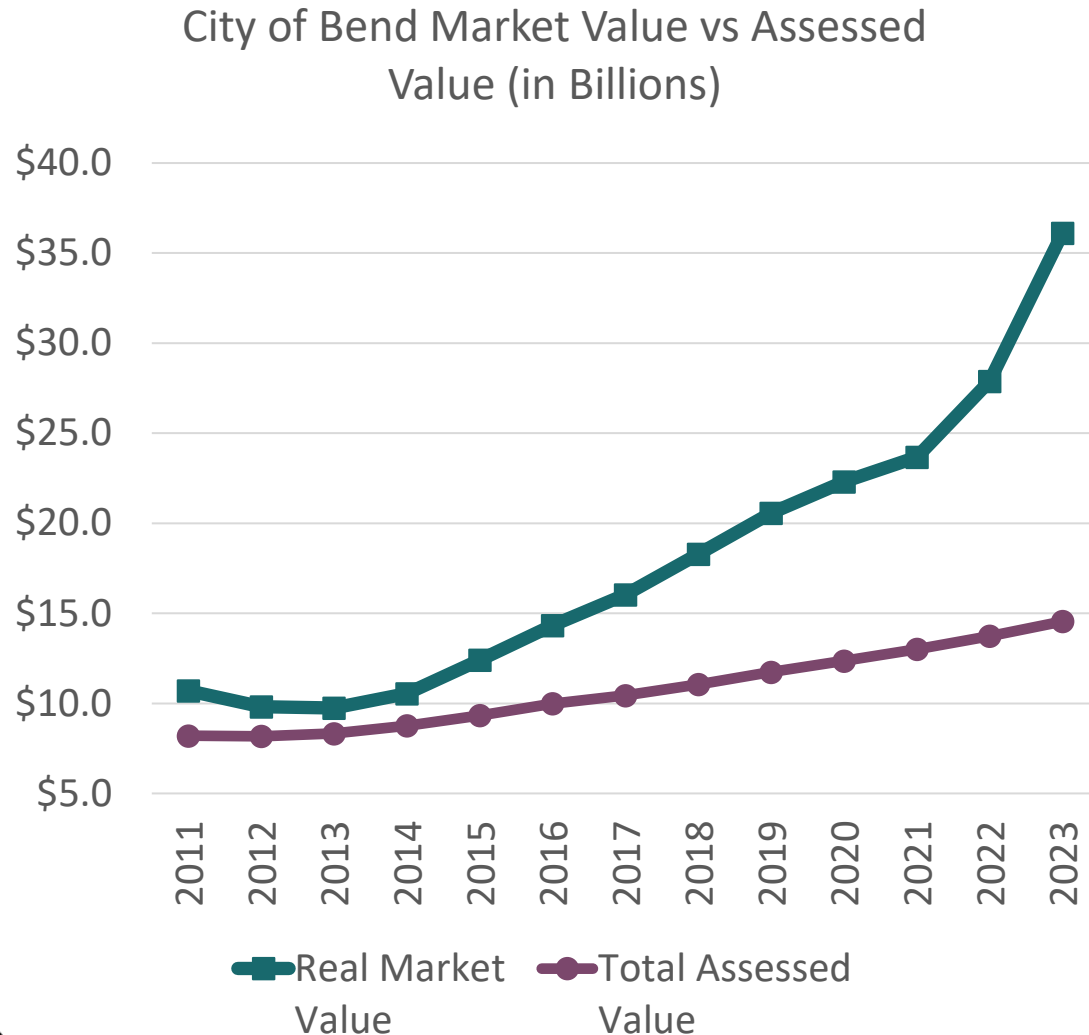
- A growing call volume makes it more likely that there will be multiple calls at once.
- When resources are tied up on one call, it may take longer for crews to respond from another station across town.
- Quick response times correlate to better patient outcomes for medical calls, and more lives and property saved for fire calls.

Rising Costs

- Looking forward from today through 2029, costs are outpacing the increase in funding:
 - Annual operating cost increase 5%
 - Annual operating revenue increase 4%
- 81% of funding is from property taxes, which are based on taxable assessed value.



Real Market vs Taxable Assessed Value

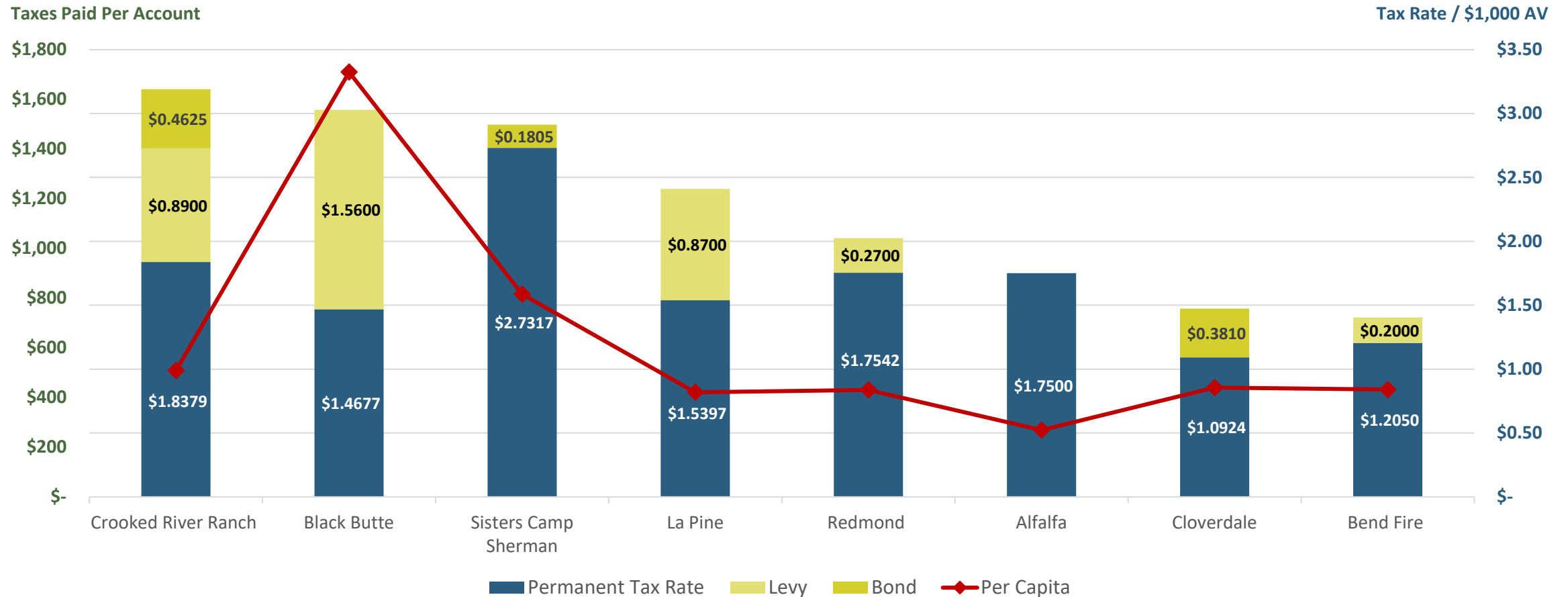


- Taxable assessed value is the amount that the local tax authority estimated for a property owner's structures and land.
- In Oregon, this amount is typically much lower than market value due to a cap on property tax that was put in place by **State Measures 5 and 50**.
- Bend has the lowest property tax rates in the state.
- Real market value has been increasing, but total assessed value growth is limited by Measures 5 and 50.



Structural Financial Challenges

Property Taxes for Fire Districts in Deschutes County



Bend's tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value is the lowest of all fire departments/districts in Deschutes County. The amount of taxes paid each year based on the # of tax accounts in each district ranges from \$269 to \$1,709. Bend property owners pay an average of \$432 for fire and EMS services.



**If the measure passes, what
would the levy cost taxpayers?**

Cost to the Average Property Owner



The proposed levy would cost taxpayers \$0.76 per \$1,000 taxable assessed value for five years.



If the measure passes, this would be a 56-cent increase from the current levy, which expires in June 2024.



The average cost for property owners in the City and Rural District would be about \$19 per month. This estimate is based on a property with a taxable assessed value of \$300,000, which is the City's average.



**If passed, what would the levy
fund?**

Retain Current Staffing Levels

- If passed, \$0.70 of the \$0.76 proposed levy would retain current staffing levels for Bend Fire & Rescue.
- This would include 10 positions that are funded by temporary funding - nine firefighter/paramedics and one business manager.
- If passed, the new measure would replace the current levy funding and the one-time infusion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, both of which expire in June 2024.



Support Staffing Demands Through 2029

- If passed, \$0.06 of the \$0.76 proposed levy would be used to support the hiring of 10 more positions for Bend Fire & Rescue.
- This would include six firefighter/paramedics, three emergency medical technicians and one ambulance biller.



Purchase Equipment & Provide Training

- If passed, the proposed measure would support continuing education and maintain essential fire and emergency medical care training for Bend Fire & Rescue first responders.
- The measure would also fund the purchase and maintenance of materials and equipment like medical supplies, fuel, personal protective equipment and vehicles.

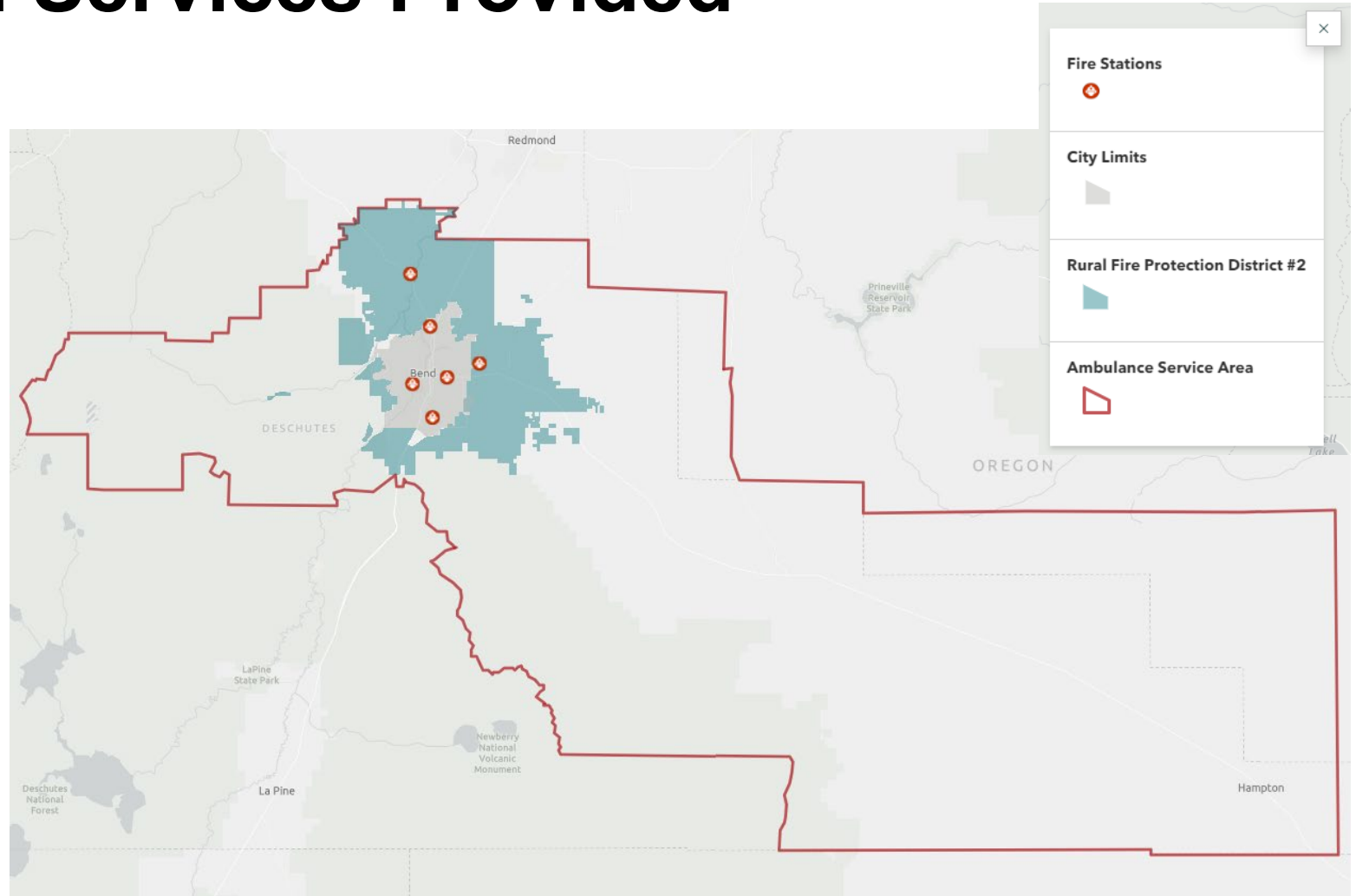


Service Area and Services Provided

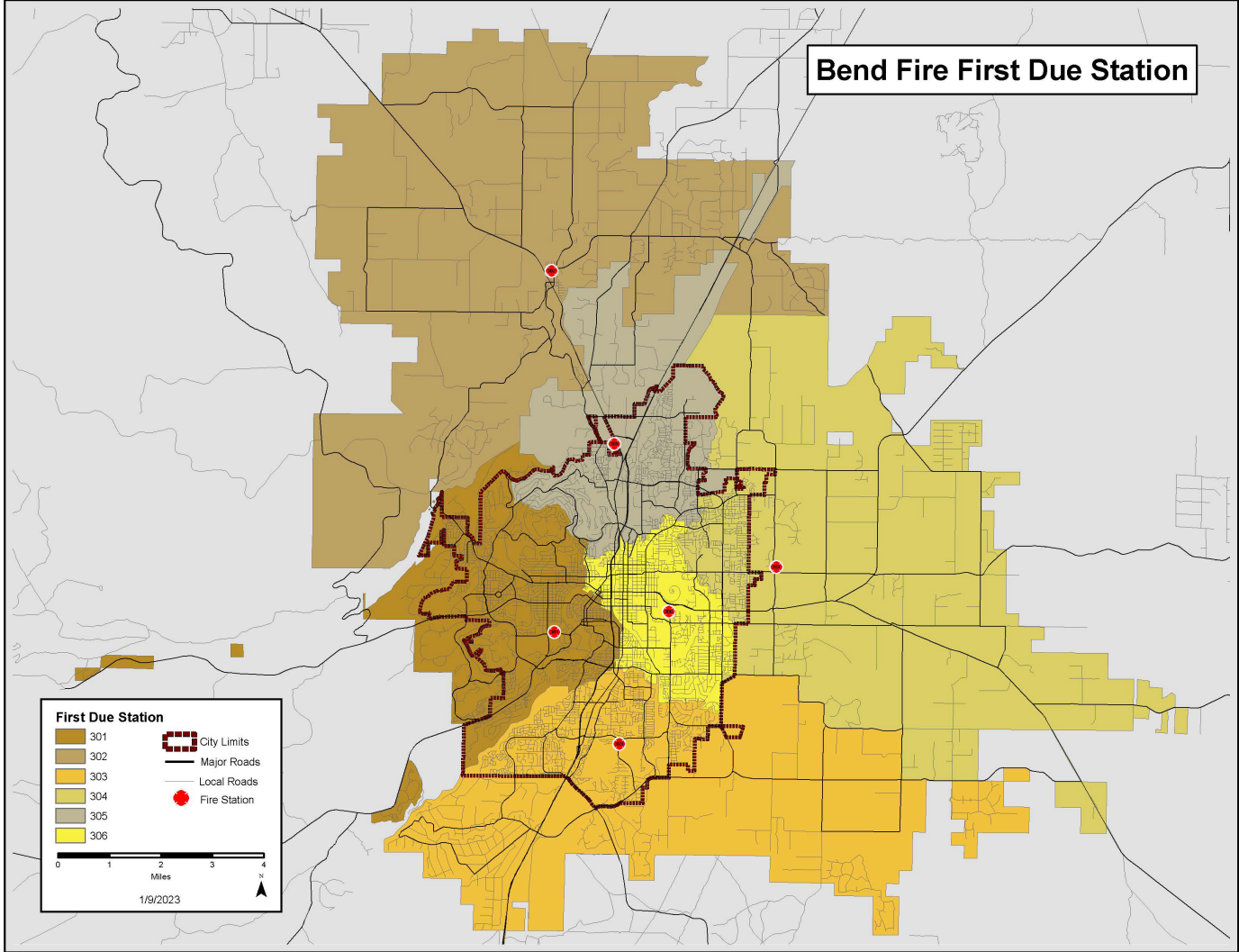
Bend Fire & Rescue serves 1,450 lane miles in Bend and the surrounding Rural community.

Services provided by Bend Fire & Rescue include:

- structural and wildland fires
- medical emergencies and motor vehicle accidents
- special rescue operations including swift water and rope rescue
- fire prevention services including fire investigations, fire mitigation inspections, smoke detector installations, and wildfire risk mitigation



Station Map



Service Levels at Current Staffing

- Staffing Pilot Butte Station
- Cardiac resuscitation rates
- Tiered EMS response system
- Service Response Vehicle program
- Emergency response time targets
 - 6 minutes in the City
 - 9 minutes in the Rural District
- Call volume growth and increased unit hour utilization



If passed, the levy would fund...



- Full staffing through June 2029.
- Increasing the 12-hour Basic Life Support ambulance program to 24 hours.
- Adding an ambulance biller to keep pace with the added volume of billing.



If the measure does not pass..

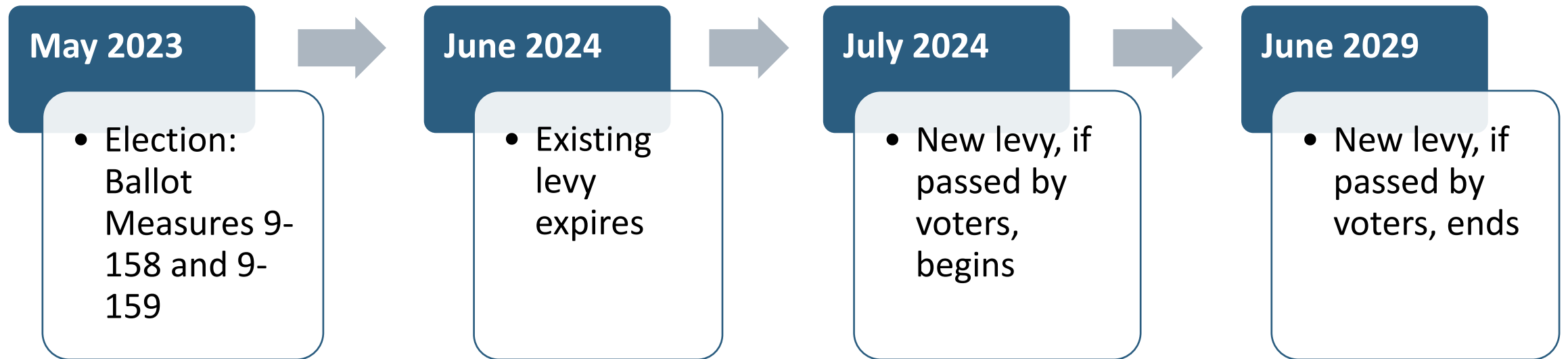


- Bend Fire & Rescue would propose a levy on up to two consecutive ballots.
- Staffing and services would not be provided as proposed and property taxes would not increase.



Next Steps

Levy Timelines



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities



To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc. please contact Makayla Oliver at moliver@bendoregon.gov or (541) 323-8571; Relay Users Dial 7-1-1.

