BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

Ambulance service in unincorporated Benton County, other than NEBCO EMSD, has historically been provided by the cities. The cities became concerned that providing the service without charging for it might subject them to a lawsuit for unlawful exaction. As a result, in 2011, the County, which had never before provided ambulance service, began paying the cities for providing ambulance service. That year Benton County provided a subsidy of $100,000 to the cities for providing the service. In 2012, the County increased the subsidy to $150,000 and in 2013, $300,000. The cities indicated that beginning in 2014, the County would need to pay the full cost of providing the service, which totaled over $900,000. That cost is expected to rise to $1.2 million in 2015 and level off thereafter. Below are the two ordinances that are proposed in order to offset this cost:

BALLOT MEASURE NO. 1

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN AMBULANCE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF BENTON COUNTY, ESTABLISHING IN THE QUORUM COURT THE AUTHORITY TO LEVY UP TO TWO-TENTHS (0.2) MILLS TO FUND SUCH DISTRICT'S OPERATIONS, REFERRING THE MATTER TO THE ELECTORS OF THE DISTRICT AT THE NOVEMBER 4, 2014 GENERAL ELECTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Emergency Medical Service District Explained:

- Per household fee would raise an estimated $527,000.00 from the residents of the unincorporated portion of the County, other than NEBCO EMSD.
- Should only this measure pass the County would continue to provide the remainder of the funds to make ambulance services available by reducing existing services by over $700,000.
- Providers would still be able to bill those actually using the service to the extent service calls were not covered by insurance.
- The proposed EMSD per household fee would be $40 annually

BALLOT MEASURE NO. 2

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE DISTRICT FOR THE UNINCORPORATED PORTION OF BENTON COUNTY NOT CURRENTLY PART OF THE NORTHEAST BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE DISTRICT, ESTABLISHING THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT, ESTABLISHING FEES TO FUND THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING A $40.00 PER HOUSEHOLD FEE, PROVIDING THAT THE PER HOUSEHOLD FEE CANNOT BE INCREASED WITHOUT A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE PROVIDING FOR THE PER HOUSEHOLD FEES TO BE INCLUDED ON THE TAX BILLS OF RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Ambulance Service District Millage Explained:

- The proposed Ambulance Service District millage would raise an estimated $833,000.00 from the residents of the entire County.
- Should only this measure pass the County would continue to provide the remainder of the funds to make ambulance services available by reducing existing services by over $420,000.
- Providers would still be able to bill those actually using the service to the extent service calls were not covered by insurance.
- The proposed millage would be 0.2 mills and as an illustration, for a property appraised at $100,000, this would result in a tax increase of $4.00.

Quick Facts....Unincorporated EMS

Eight providers
678 square miles
1685 road miles
19268 Households
Population of 43,320

Should both measures pass no adjustment to the county budget should be required to pay for emergency medical services.