



**HAYS COUNTY  
EMERGENCY SERVICE  
DISTRICT #4  
WIMBERLEY FIRE RESCUE**



## **Tax change needed to expand FIRE AND RESCUE services for our growing community**

*The Mission of Hays County Emergency Services District #4 (HCESD #4) is to provide for the protection of life and property for the Wimberley Valley by maintaining Fire and Rescue service that is effective, efficient and appropriate for the needs of the community.*

**To Wimberley Valley Community Members:**

Due to explosive population growth in Hays County/Wimberley Valley and dwindling volunteer participation, HCESD#4 has determined it is time to take the steps necessary to ensure the safety of our changing Wimberley Valley. Those steps require personnel on duty 24/7, along with the facilities and equipment to support our growing needs. This will require an increased tax rate to provide for paid, career fire and rescue services.

Since its inception, HCESD#4 has maintained one of the lowest tax rates (for taxing entities) in Hays County and has relied heavily on the commitment of men and women who volunteered their time to train, and respond to our neighbors' emergency needs. Fire fighting is hard, dirty, and sometimes dangerous work and great credit should be given to those who answer the call. Over the years our volunteer numbers have dwindled, in part due to the increasing time commitment required to train and respond, but also because of the demands of maintaining full-time jobs and family relationships.

Over the past 20 years, HCESD#4 has evolved from paying our part-time volunteers to staff the station during business hours and to maintain equipment, to our current model of full-time fire fighters who staff the station during business hours and are "on call" to respond from their residences on nights and weekends. These fire fighters are augmented with volunteers who respond from their homes around our community. This proposed tax increase will establish having paid personnel at the station 24/7, ready to respond to any 911 call.

The advantages of having the station staffed 24/7 are many. First, personnel are ready to respond from the station with required equipment as soon as the call goes out, significantly reducing the time for fire fighters to arrive at a scene. In an emergency, that response time is critical and can save lives and property. Second, is having an increased level of training and certification of the fire fighters that are employed by HCESD#4. Third, is increased safety for the fire fighters themselves. Having more fire fighters that are trained and prepared to do the job is safer for them as well as for the volunteers that will still be needed to respond and who augment the paid personnel. Lastly, decreased response times and increased certified career staffing should positively affect fire insurance rates in the district potentially offsetting some of the recent property tax increases.

**HCESD#4**

The HCESD#4 Board has come to the conclusion that the only way to add additional personnel, equipment, and prepare for the future is to obtain additional funding. This is the driving force for the District Board making this adjustment to our tax collection. We feel that having fire personnel housed at the fire station 24/7 is the expectation of our growing community, and the Board's desire to meet those expectations.

We invite you to come and participate at our public hearings where we will break down the facts leading to this decision. Present will ESD#4's Board Commissioners, and WFR's Fire Chief and Assistant Chief to answer your questions and concerns.

Public hearing notices will be published in the Wimberley View. Hearings will occur on September 3, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. and September 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Station located at 111 Green Acres Drive in Wimberley. Please call our station at 512-847-3536, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., for additional information.

We hope to see you at the upcoming public hearings.