



Why are the districts considering consolidation?

- A combination of extremely restrictive property tax levy limits and increasing expenditure pressures has led many fire districts in Arizona to reconsider the manner in which they are providing services. In particular, several have already decided to successfully share or consolidate services with neighboring districts in order to reduce duplication of efforts and overhead costs.
- The notion of consolidation is not a new one and has been undertaken in both private and government organizations for many years. Special taxing districts, such as North County and Wittmann, are very vulnerable to tax limitation laws and downturns in revenue that will significantly impact our ability to adequately fund emergency service operations into the future.
- Quite simply, the consolidation efforts are being explored as a potential means to achieve long-term financial stability with the ultimate goal of maintaining or enhancing existing levels of emergency services for the citizens of North County and Wittmann Fire & Medical Districts.

Will there be a decrease in emergency services received by North County or Wittmann residents if the consolidation is approved?

- No. The consolidation would ultimately result in increased benefits and also in the depth of the overall emergency service resources for the citizens of both districts.

Will any North County or Wittmann Firefighters lose their jobs because of the consolidation?

- No. Firefighters from both districts will be integrated throughout the consolidated district to meet the organizational needs of the entire district.

Will any existing fire stations from either district be closed?

- No. All five district fire stations would remain open with no reduction in service levels.

Will the name of either district change?

- The consolidated district would operate under the name "North County Fire & Medical District".

What will happen when I call 9-1-1 to report a fire or medical emergency?

- North County residents will not see a change when dialing 9-1-1. However, a consolidated district would increase the number of apparatus and resources available to be dispatched automatically to emergency incidents within both districts.
- North County regularly assists Wittmann with emergency responses via an existing *mutual-aid* agreement. If consolidated, Wittmann would be transitioned into the Regional *Automatic-Aid* Response System made up of most Phoenix area fire departments including North County, Surprise, Peoria, and over 23 others. This system uses computer aided technology to automatically dispatch emergency apparatus, including specialized teams (i.e. Haz-Mat, technical rescue, etc), from the closest fire station regardless of jurisdiction boundaries.

Will my taxes increase if the consolidation is approved?

- The 2017 tax rate for existing North County property owners is projected to increase, due to consolidation, by approximately \$.0164 cents or an annual cost of \$2.05 for a typical residential property owner. However, the financial analysis conducted by the independent consultants outlines an ongoing annual tax savings for North County property owners after the first several years of consolidated operations due in large part to gained operational efficiencies, economies of scale, new building construction, and increased assessed valuations.
- Without consolidation, the 2017 North County tax rate is projected to increase due in large part to the partial conclusion of a significant federal staffing grant.
- The 2017 tax rate for existing Wittmann property owners is projected to decrease by approximately \$.423 cents or an annual tax reduction of \$52.87 for a typical home owner.
- Without consolidation, the Wittmann tax rate for 2017 is estimated to remain at the \$3.25 rate cap.

Who approves the consolidation?

- The Governing Boards of both North County and Wittmann have adopted resolutions declaring that a consolidation of the districts be considered.
- Both governing boards then commissioned a comprehensive consolidation feasibility analysis and economist valuation and growth study; each of which were conducted by independent third parties.
- Both governing boards have now scheduled public hearings to consider taxpayer comments and to determine if a consolidation would be in their best interest.
- If the governing boards adopt a resolution that the consolidation would promote public health, comfort, convenience, necessity or welfare and each board reaches unanimous consent, then North County Fire & Medical District shall adopt a resolution declaring the two districts consolidated and joined pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §48-822.
- If each of the governing boards does not reach unanimous consent to approve the consolidation, then the governing boards of each district may consider asking the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to call for an election to consolidate the fire districts.

What laws govern fire district consolidations?

- Arizona Revised Statute §48-822 governs Fire District consolidations.
- Due to continued financial concerns, the Arizona State Legislature recently revised the laws governing fire district mergers and consolidations to encourage fire districts to explore these options as a possible opportunity to reduce operational redundancies and expenses in an attempt to maintain service delivery levels and achieve financial stability.

Will an elected Board of Directors still oversee the consolidated districts?

- Yes. There will still be five elected board members to serve the entire district.
- Directors are elected at large by district voters and meet in open public session typically twice per month to oversee the district budget and make policy decisions, ensuring that the district's resources are wisely allocated.

How can I find out more information regarding the potential consolidation?

- More information is available at www.ncfmd.az.gov or you can call the North County Administrative Offices at (623) 544-5400.