

BENTON FIRE DISTRICT 4

ABOUT BENTON FIRE DISTRICT 4

- Benton Fire District 4 has remained geographically unchanged since its inception in 1989 (BFD4 is 174 square miles)
- In 1999 the population was approximately 6,500. When the census data is updated, the district population is expected to be 33,000 or more
- The majority of the population growth has occurred between Bossier City and Benton, with a steady increase in population around the Cypress Lake area as well
- The North Airline Drive area from Bossier City limits is already a booming area of interest and promises to expand along with the Crouch Road – Swan Lake Road area of our district when completion of that connection occurs in the near future

Listed below is a brief history of our present organizational development of previous planning periods, utilizing our current method of 5-year PIAL grading cycles and 10-year tax renewal, which is our current primary source of funding.

- 1989, the Bossier Parish Police Jury (BPPJ) formed special taxing districts, charged with providing fire services within stated boundaries – Benton Fire District #4 (BFD4)
- BPPJ granted approval to bring a proposal before taxpayers for a 10-mill operations tax to build 5 stations and provide equipment necessary to operate them
 - o The proposal passed and a full volunteer staff began operations shortly after.
- In May of 1997, the operations tax was renewed and the approval of an additional 10 mills to hire full time firefighters and a paid fire chief was passed on July 18, 1998
- In September of 2006, the taxes were renewed for an additional 10 years with the combined millage of 20mills. Again, the tax was renewed on April 9, 2016 and remains the primary funding source of all operations within our 174 square mile response district
- The funding and rating cycles are as followed:
 - o In 1997, with an almost all volunteer force, the annual revenue for BFD4 was \$245,643.00 with an annual run total of less than 200 calls for service. There were approximately 6,500 residents to protect
 - o In 1999, the first year of the additional tax, the annual budget was \$546,230.00. This provided 3 paid firefighters, 1 fire chief, 1 full time bookkeeper, and 1 part time clerk. 15 to 20 volunteer staff were available to supplement the 685 calls for service that year (Average of 1.8 calls per day). The PIAL rating was a Class 6 at this time
 - o In 2006, with an annual budget of \$1,148,639.00, firefighter staffing levels rose to 12 paid firefighters, a fire chief, a mechanic, a bookkeeper, and a clerk. The population of the district was approximately 16,000 residents with 1,143 calls for service (Average of 3.1 calls per day). The PIAL rating was a Class 5 at this time

- In 2011, calls for service increased to 1,477 (Average of 4 calls per day), it was necessary to open and staff a second station due to the increase in calls for service and the increased time to reach calls in that area. A budget of \$2,288,884.00 provided 20 firefighters, a fire chief, a mechanic, a safety officer, and 2 clerical book-keepers. The PIAL rating was a Class 4 at this time
 - The district utilized the existing station on Parks Road (The station was remodeled to provide living quarters for firefighters) to save money and to respond to these calls more efficiently, dramatically reducing response times in that area
- In 2015, the district population grew to approximately 23,000 and an additional station was manned on Swan Lake Road to address the slowing response times due to station distribution. A budget of \$2,549,012.00 provided 25 firefighters, a fire chief, an administrative officer, a safety officer, a mechanic, and a payroll clerk. The 2015 call volume increased to 1,820 (Average of 5 calls per day). The PIAL rating was a Class 4 at this time
- In 2016, an additional 5 firefighters were hired to address reoccurring shortages in personnel responding to calls for service and to prepare for the PIAL rating the following year. The shortages were made apparent due to the different methods of water distribution required by PIAL along with a continued decrease in volunteer participation. A budget of \$2,797,217.00 provided 30 firefighters, a fire chief, an administrative officer, a human resources officer, a training officer, a mechanic, and a safety officer. The 2016 call volume increased to 1,942 (Average of 5.3 calls per day). The PIAL rating remained a Class 4 at this time
- In 2018, the PIAL rating improved to a Class 3, mainly due to utilizing the increase in full time staff to man the additional station on Swan Lake Road. A budget of \$3,313,230.00 provided 30 firefighters, a fire chief, an administrative officer, a human resources officer, a training officer, a safety officer, and a mechanic. The 2018 call volume increased to 2,057 (Average of 5.6 calls per day).
- In 2019, the PIAL rating and staffing level remained the same as the previous year. The annual budget was \$3,454,079.00. The 2019 call volume increased to 2,178.
- In 2020, the PIAL rating and staffing levels remain the same as the previous year. The annual budget was 3,685,300.00. The 2020 call volume increased to 2,223 (Average of 6 calls per day).
 - As of October 31, 2021 the district is 270 calls above the previous year for the same time period, the call volume at the end of 2021 is expected to meet or exceed 2,500 (Average of 6.8 calls per day). This would represent a 13.5% increase in call volume.
 - October 31, 2021 – 1,822 incidents
 - October 31, 2020 – 2,092 incidents

Notes on prior years capital outlay include:

- Year 2000: 1 E-One custom 1,500 gpm rescue pumper for \$235,000.00
- Year 2001: Constructed training building and double bay maintenance shop for \$135,000.00
- Year 2009: 1 E-One custom 1,500 gpm rescue pumper for \$550,000.00

- Year 2011: Remodeled station 2 for manning for \$75,000.00
- Year 2013: 1 E-One custom 1,500 gpm rescue pumper for \$600,000.00
- Year 2015: Major remodel of station 1 for \$400,000.00, moved administration functions to BPEMS Emergency Service Complex in a joint endeavor, and moved medic crew to station 1 in Benton proper
- Year 2016: Refurbished 2 1990 model FMC 1,200 gpm pumpers for \$120,000.00 each
- Year 2017: Major remodel of station 2 for \$120,000.00 to accomplish command function of headquarters with the addition of district chiefs on each of the three shifts. The district added buildings and equipment necessary for water rescue operations within the district and built 1 medium rescue service truck for district chiefs for \$80,000.00
- Year 2020: Various equipment purchases necessary for efficient operations.

Equipment list and capital outlay projected for the next 15-year planning period are a direct result of the increased demand for fire services from the growing population. The following list represents the minimum equipment necessary and the average cost of this equipment over the next 15-year period to meet that demand:

ITEM	NEEDED	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
Engine	4	725,000.00	2,900,000.00
Tanker	2	300,000.00	600,000.00
All Purpose Vehicle	8	45,000.00	360,000.00
Rescue	2	80,000.00	160,000.00
Station Remodel	1	375,000.00	375,000.00
SCBA	54	7,000.00	378,000.00
Spare SCBA Bottle	120	1,500.00	180,000.00
Bunker Gear	55	2,450.00	134,750.00
LifePak	2	38,000.00	76,000.00
Hydraulic Tools	3	17,000.00	51,000.00
Hose 5"	30	600.00	18,000.00
Hose 1", 1.75", 2.5"	50	165.00	8,250.00
Training Props			50,000.00
Computers			48,000.00
Radio Equipment			20,000.00
Loose Equipment			75,000.00
		TOTAL	5,434,000.00

What increase would the average tax payer pay for an additional 2 mill tax?

Listed below are the current amounts paid by tax payers for 20 mills and the additional cost to tax payers if a 2-mill tax increase is approved.

Note: The amount of tax paid on a property is determined by using the assessed value NOT the market value of a property

- *Example: A property is listed for sale at a price of \$175,000.00 and sells for that amount, this would be the market value of the property. The tax assessor may then set the assessed value for this property at \$150,000.00, this would be the amount used to determine the amount of taxes paid on the property. Using the chart below, after homestead exemption, the property owner would pay taxes on \$75,000.00. In this example, the additional 2 mill tax would equal an additional \$15.00 per year or \$1.25 per month in taxes.*

Property Value	Property Value WITH Home/Exempt.	Current Cost of 20 Mill	Cost of Additional 2 Mill	Combined 22 Mill TOTAL
\$100,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$50.00	\$5.00	\$55.00
\$125,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$100.00	\$10.00	\$110.00
\$150,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$150.00	\$15.00	\$165.00
\$175,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$200.00	\$20.00	\$220.00
\$200,000.00	\$125,000.00	\$250.00	\$25.00	\$275.00
\$225,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$300.00	\$30.00	\$330.00
\$250,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$350.00	\$35.00	\$385.00
\$275,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$400.00	\$40.00	\$440.00
\$300,000.00	\$225,000.00	\$450.00	\$45.00	\$495.00
\$325,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$500.00	\$50.00	\$550.00
\$350,000.00	\$275,000.00	\$550.00	\$55.00	\$605.00
\$375,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$600.00	\$60.00	\$660.00
\$400,000.00	\$325,000.00	\$650.00	\$65.00	\$715.00
\$450,000.00	\$375,000.00	\$750.00	\$75.00	\$825.00
\$500,000.00	\$425,000.00	\$850.00	\$85.00	\$935.00
\$600,000.00	\$525,000.00	\$1,050.00	\$105.00	\$1,155.00
\$700,000.00	\$625,000.00	\$1,250.00	\$125.00	\$1,375.00
\$900,000.00	\$825,000.00	\$1,650.00	\$165.00	\$1,815.00
\$1,000,000.00	\$925,000.00	\$1,850.00	\$185.00	\$2,035.00

Why does the district need an additional millage tax, in addition to the 20-mill tax they currently receive?

- The current 20-mill tax provides funding for day-to-day operations such as wages, insurance, utilities, retirement, and apparatus/station maintenance.
 - o The cost of operations has increased year after year and continues to increase each year
 - o Over the past 20 years the district has used operating funds for the purchase of apparatus/equipment and added additional firefighters to respond to incidents as the taxes received have increased
 - 90% of the districts total budget is used for employee costs
 - o Currently, all taxes received are used for operations with little to no remaining funds to be used for the purchase of new apparatus / equipment or training resources such as props and facilities.

If approved, what amount will a 2-mill tax generate and how will these funds be used?

The 2-mill tax will generate approximately \$390,000.00 per year

- The district will seek approval to obtain a \$2,500,000.00 bond with a yearly note of approximately \$220,000.00 to purchase priority items of need and use the remaining amount to purchase apparatus / equipment periodically over the next 15-year period
- Bonds allow the issuance of debt at the time they are needed at a low interest rate
- The district will have the ability to use these bond funds immediately for priority items of need that will be relevant over the next 15-year period
- Bond funds will NOT be used for employee salaries or benefits
 - o Bond funds will be used for the following type of projects
 - Adding living quarters to the fire station on Swan Lake Road to decrease enroute response times (Firefighters are currently living in the building behind the station approximately 60 yards from the station, adding at least 1 minute to the enroute response time)
 - Replace all SCBA and spare cylinders (Current SCBA owned by the district are no longer manufactured and must be replaced)
 - Purchase new fire engine(s) (Newest Engine is a 2013 model, in 2015 the district refurbished 2 1990 model engines)
 - Replace all hydraulic extrication tools (Newest set of extrication tools is 6 years old)
 - Purchase new tanker(s) (Newest Tanker is a 2010 model)
 - Purchase new rescue truck(s) (Newest Rescue is a 2014 model)
 - Purchase new cardiac monitor(s) (Need to replace obsolete LifePak 12)
 - Purchase bunker gear

- After the yearly bond payment, approximately \$170,000.00 will remain from the funds obtained from the 2-mill tax
- These remaining funds will be placed in a separate account from current operating accounts and as the funds build over time, they will be used to periodically replace old/obsolete apparatus and equipment over the next 15-year period as they are needed
- Listed below are some of the reasons that the entire amount of funds received from the tax will NOT be used for a bond
 - The majority of the apparatus and equipment owned by the district were purchased around the same time period; creating the need to replace the majority of this equipment, that is rapidly approaching the end of serviceable life, all at the same time
 - 85% of funds obtained from a bond must be used within the first 3 years of issuance
 - If all of the funds obtained by the 2-mill tax were used to acquire and pay for a bond it would allow the district to obtain a larger amount of funds initially but the district would be required to use 85% of these funds within the first 3 years, thus creating the issue of having to replace the majority of these purchases around the same time in the future
 - Obtaining additional funding via millage tax now and using part of the funds to pay for a bond and the remaining to purchase equipment over time will prevent the district from attempting to secure a larger amount of funds in the future.

What happens if the additional 2 mill tax is not passed by voters?

In the event additional funding is not received, every attempt will be made to continue providing the current level of service by the district. However, apparatus and equipment may or may not be serviceable for the foreseeable future. Without serviceable apparatus and equipment; capabilities to provide current services may decrease. In addition, valuable PIAL points for apparatus and equipment may be deducted causing the PIAL rating to increase to a higher classification.

What effect if any will the additional funding do for the PIAL rating?

Note: The primary reason for seeking additional funding is to replace aging apparatus and equipment and add living quarters to the station on Swan Lake Road, doing so will allow the continuance of the level of service currently provided and decrease response times by more than 1 minute in the station 3 area. While improving the rating is important, providing emergency services is the primary goal. The purchases will provide the district with a more dependable fleet of apparatus, equipment that meets the most current standards, and will ensure that the district keeps all of the credit currently received in the PIAL grading.

If funding is obtained by adding the additional millage, it will enable the district to purchase up to date apparatus and equipment that meet current standards to at least maintain the current PIAL rating with the potential to improve the rating in the future.

Listed below is the average cost of insurance for a \$100,000.00 and \$250,000.00 policy for a class 3, 4, and 5 PIAL Rating and the potential change in the cost of the premiums if there is an increase in the rating.

INSURED AMOUNT	INSURANCE COST CLASS 3	INSURANCE COST CLASS 4	INSURANCE COST CLASS 5
\$100,000.00	\$680.00	\$711.00	\$763.00
\$250,000.00	\$2,257.00	\$2,368.00	\$2,543.00

What has been done to try to remedy the lack of funds?

Each year the district applies for grant funding through FEMA. These are complete grants that all fire agencies in the US apply for each year. Although the district has applied for these grants each year; funding from these grants has only been obtained 2 times in the last 14 years to purchase SCBA and hydraulic rescue tools

At the end of 2019 the district began billing insurance companies to attempt to recoup some of the cost incurred for providing services on structural fires, motor vehicle accidents, and hazardous materials incidents. (Insurance either does or does not pay, we do not charge the taxpayers if the claim is denied)

- The current budget allows for the initial yearly cost of purchasing needed materials to provide these services

Example: Class A Foam used for structural firefighting

- o The district may purchase 40 buckets of foam to begin the year at \$70.00 per bucket (\$2,800.00 total)
- o Depending on the type and size of fire, 1 to 10 or more buckets of foam may be used on a single incident depending on the extent and type of fire involvement
- o If 10 buckets are used on a single call (\$700.00) we have depleted 1/4 of the supply
- o Billing insurance for cost recovery will allow us to replenish all or part of our supply of Class A Foam without spending additional operating funds

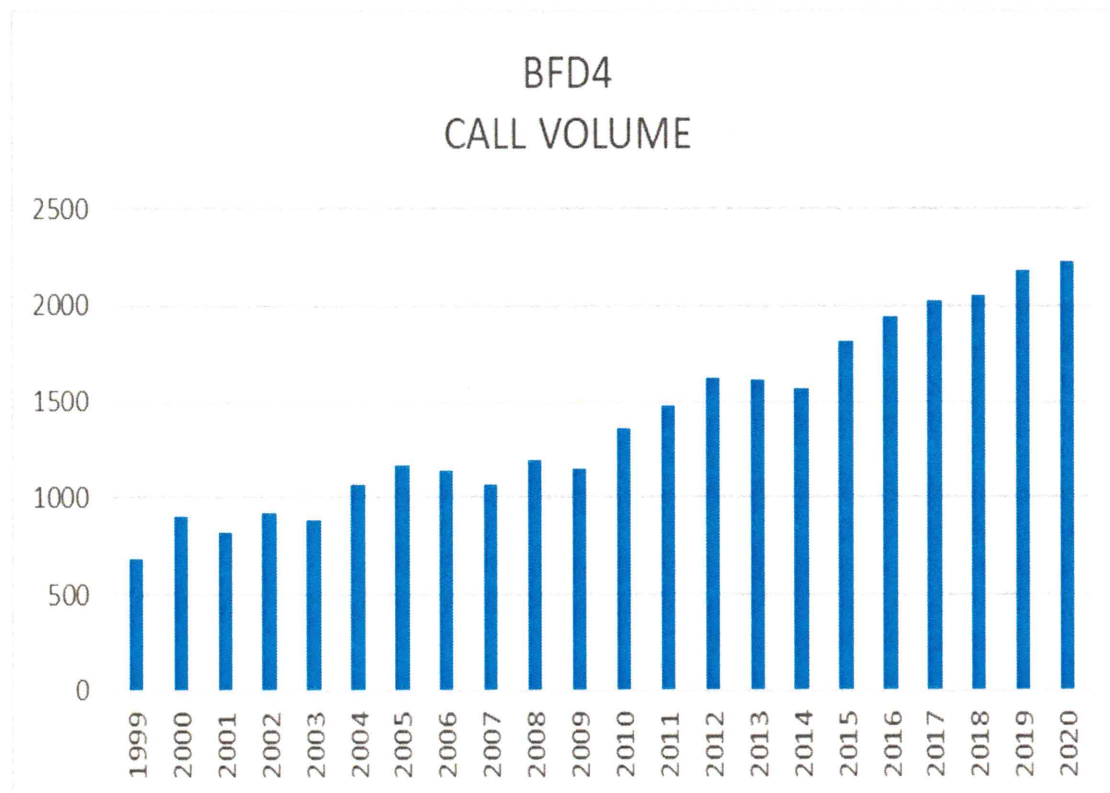
The district entered into a cooperative endeavor agreement with Bossier Parish EMS to utilize building space to avoid the additional cost of purchasing land and constructing new buildings

- o The district shares administrative office space in the EMS building on Swan Lake Road. Bossier EMS moved a full-time crew/medics unit into the fire station in the town of Benton – this space was created by moving fire administration to the station on Swan Lake Road
- o Sharing these spaces prevented the need for any new construction

The district has explored the possibility of borrowing money for large purchases but with very little money remaining from the yearly budget there is no way to pay a yearly note without decreasing or completely cutting other budgeted items

- If the district were to obtain a loan, the loan term could only extend to the next renewal date of the current millage taxes
 - The district is due to renew the millage in 2026
 - A loan in 2021 could only have a 5-year term
 - A \$500,000.00 loan with no interest would cost \$100,000.00 per year to pay the note

Annual call volume for BFD4 1999 - 2020



The call volume is expected to reach 2,500 (6.8 per day) or more by the end of 2021

- If the average yearly increase in call volume is 5% to 7%, the yearly call volume will be between 3,200 (8.7 per day) and 3,500 (9.5 per day) calls per year within 5 years

REVENUE	2020 BUDGET	2019 BUDGET	2018 BUDGET	2017 BUDGET	2016 BUDGET	2015 BUDGET
Taxes	3,594,537.93	3,454,745.00	3,313,204.00	3,147,451.00	2,938,931.30	2,993,362.63
Insurance Rebate	87,948.00	88,065.00	87,842.00	95,859.00	142,333.05	99,846.19
Investment Income	2,114.00	1,954.00	1,750.00	1,492.00	2,497.02	2,034.07
Miscellaneous Revenue	135,875.00	141,717.00	42,328.00	48,651.00	756.33	77,443.87
Rollover Funds(Reserve)	0.00	0.00	110,000.00	250,000.00	434,338.37	800,000.00
Total Revenues	3,820,474.93	3,686,481.00	3,555,124.00	3,543,453.00	3,518,856.07	3,972,686.76
ACCOUNT	2020 BUDGET	2019 BUDGET	2018 BUDGET	2017 BUDGET	2016 BUDGET	2015 BUDGET
IT Equip Purchased	8,484.00	3,626.00	2,000.00	4,759.00	17,000.00	24,000.00
IT Hosting / support	29,171.00	23,881.00	19,500.00	18,000.00	13,500.00	10,500.00
Pension Fund	114,946.00	109,777.00	105,000.00	99,410.00	94,120.07	90,600.00
Wages	2,148,317.00	2,216,988.00	2,156,000.00	2,075,000.00	1,947,497.00	1,564,000.00
Contract Services	77,701.00	54,545.00	32,000.00	65,500.00	36,000.00	3,300.00
Association Dues	1,865.00	2,010.00	2,100.00	1,886.00	2,300.00	1,775.00
Training	8,205.00	8,964.00	11,000.00	12,464.00	18,000.00	21,500.00
Fire Prevention	1,147.00	509.00	2,500.00	3,181.00	2,700.00	3,200.00
Audit and Accounting	12,594.00	12,715.00	14,000.00	10,000.00	8,400.00	8,000.00
Utilities	28,410.00	29,875.00	32,000.00	29,200.00	26,000.00	27,200.00
Telephone	6,930.00	6,795.00	11,000.00	12,000.00	8,400.00	9,300.00
Building Lease	2,135.00	2,243.00	2,500.00	2,000.00	2,400.00	2,400.00
Building Maintenance	7,559.00	653.00	7,500.00	4,000.00	31,000.00	82,000.00
Maintenance Support	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	400.00	3,500.00	1,000.00
Insurance	471,030.00	465,996.00	485,000.00	400,000.00	361,000.00	300,000.00
Travel	0.00	0.00	250.00	303.00	1,000.00	100.00
Fuel	27,324.00	33,459.00	30,000.00	32,000.00	23,000.00	31,000.00
Administration Expense	8,764.00	5,182.00	7,000.00	12,500.00	33,000.00	20,000.00
Office Supplies	924.00	358.00	1,500.00	2,000.00	4,000.00	5,600.00
Station Supplies	11,101.00	6,744.00	6,000.00	10,000.00	24,000.00	48,000.00
Rescue Supplies	7,604.00	211.00	1,500.00	6,000.00	39,500.00	2,600.00
Fire Supplies	2,400.00	1,921.00	3,500.00	1,900.00	6,000.00	7,200.00
Apparatus Maintenance	48,450.00	43,591.00	50,000.00	55,000.00	55,000.00	89,000.00
Radio/Pager Maintenance	622.00	4,823.00	1,000.00	1,400.00	3,500.00	6,200.00
Breathing Air Maintenance	0.00	99.00	1,000.00	6,100.00	8,000.00	1,000.00
Equipment Maintenance	6,546.00	8,593.00	6,000.00	7,000.00	6,500.00	8,200.00
Building Renovation	24.00	0.00	0.00	76,000.00	50,000.00	122,000.00
Uniforms/Protective Clothing	9,854.00	17,557.00	25,000.00	26,500.00	65,000.00	114,230.00
Tax Assr.& Collector Expense	0.00	0.00	700.00	0.00	0.00	9,600.00
Property Damage	61,364.00	525.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
Payroll Expenses	41,601.00	44,446.00	45,000.00	42,000.00	37,664.00	32,000.00
Firefighter Retirement Expense	611,481.00	578,021.00	550,000.00	508,000.00	478,975.00	405,000.00
Communication Equipment	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Office Equipment Purchased	229.00	0.00	1,000.00	500.00	0.00	800.00
Station Equipment purchased	752.00	238.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	1,000.00	21,000.00
Engineer & Architect Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
New Equipment-Capital Outlay	60,456.00	343.00	3,000.00	12,000.00	110,000.00	518,000.00
Reimburse Caddo Fire Dist. 7	950.00	950.00	950.00	950.00	920.00	920.00
Miscellaneous	850.00	843.00	1,850.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenditures	3,819,790.00	3,686,481.00	3,622,350.00	3,543,453.00	3,518,876.07	3,593,725.00