

# *City of Hailey*

## *Woodside Fire Station Information Sheet.*

Frequently asked questions

### **Why do we need a new fire station?**

Since the early 1970's, there have been plans to locate a fire station at the proposed site of this station. Now that approximately 90% of the Woodside Subdivision area is either built out or is in the process of being built out, we are finding a greater need for a station to be located there. Listed below are some of the reasons justifying this fire station.

1. Currently, the average response time to emergency calls to the central and south Woodside area's is about 8.5 minutes, while our citywide average to calls is only 3-4 minutes. The Department's goal is to provide a 3 minute average response to any call within the city.
2. With the "build out" of the Woodside Subdivision virtually complete, we are finding that the calls for emergency services is increasing faster in this area than any other area of the city.
3. With the significant growth of the City of Hailey, the needs of the Fire Department have also grown. We have outgrown the 1,200 Square feet of office and training room space at our existing facility, and are in urgent need of additional apparatus and equipment storage space. Currently we have an immediate need for at least 2 more heated apparatus bays.
4. Continued growth will require additional full time personnel, along with facilities to accommodate 24/7 living and work spaces.
5. Due to the high cost of housing in our area, over 60% of our "Volunteer" firefighters and EMT's reside in Woodside. In order to respond to any emergency call, they have to drive to our downtown location, get dressed in their protective equipment, wait for enough personnel to adequately staff a fire engine, and proceed to the emergency scene. If the emergency is located anywhere south of our existing station, considerable time is lost by "back tracking" to the Woodside area. The proposed station is estimated to save an average of more than 3 minutes in the response time to emergencies located in the Woodside area, and one or two minutes to emergencies located elsewhere in the city as the drive time in personnel vehicles to a station would be significantly reduced.
6. New construction of structures located in central and south Woodside, and also in Northridge areas have a significant negative impact on our fire insurance "Protection Class" rating, which is directly tied to insurance premiums paid by all commercial and business property owners. (See additional information below)

### **How much will it cost to build this station?**

Virtually everyone is aware of the rapidly increasing cost of building construction. The scarcity of concrete, lumber, steel, copper, plywood, and labor have all contributed to

doubling the cost per square foot of commercial and residential construction over the past several years. Our proposed building is no exception.

The proposed building currently contains two double length apparatus bays that can house 4 apparatus; and administrative wing that provides a modest office area for the administrative and fire prevention functions, as well as a moderately sized classroom that can seat approximately 45 persons. This area can also be designed to provide an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to centrally manage any significant threat or hazard to our city; and a "Duty quarters" wing which serve as the living quarters for up to 4 emergency personnel who are on a 24 hour shift rotation schedule.

The total proposed square footages of the building include:

Apparatus Bay Area ----	4,800/sf	(plus an additional 1,600 sf. of mezzanine storage)
Administrative Wing ---	2,880/sf	
Duty Quarters -----	<u>2,765/sf</u>	
TOTAL	10,445/sf	

Total cost estimate provided by Kreizenbeck Constructors based on preliminary drawings dated June 5, 2006, minus the various items or building features that were deemed non-essential, results in a construction total of \$2,639,585

This translates to approximately \$246/sf for construction costs.

The land for the station has been graciously deeded to the city by Dave Anderson, of Springer/Grubb Development. Additional costs for landscaping, furniture, equipment and professional service fees are not included in the above construction costs.

The city is proposing that an existing bond that the city has been paying off for the purchase of our existing city hall building (Fox/Brown Building), is near the end of its term. We are recommending that a new 20 Year Bond be issued for the same amount and term that would provide approximately 2.3 million dollars with which to finance the majority of the project, resulting in no significant change in the amount of taxes that our citizens are currently paying.

**What will it cost if we don't build the new station?**

From a Health, Safety and Welfare point of view, a decision not to build a station in this area, would continue an extended average response time for fire apparatus to reach these areas of more than 8 minutes. These extra minutes can easily allow a developing emergency to reach a point where little can be done to protect life or property.

From a purely financial point of view, the first certain impact of not building a new station, would be the need to renovate, repair and enlarge our existing fire station to accommodate current and future apparatus and equipment needs. This type of renovating is never inexpensive, and would be difficult to accomplish while still occupying the station.

However the most significant financial impact would most likely come from the fact that most of the insurance companies that insure our homes and businesses use a fire protection class rating to determine how much of a premium that they will charge for the fire insurance for the insured property. The rating is based on an evaluation of the public water system, fire protection capabilities, and the adequacy of the dispatch center. Currently the overall score for the City of Hailey is a "**Class 4**" rating. This is measured on a scale of 1 through 10, and the lower score being better than a higher score.

During our last evaluation during 1997, it was explained to us that we lost points because the areas located on the north and south ends of town were located outside of the response district for our fire station. The Idaho Rating & Survey Bureau (IS&R) administers the fire protection class rating, and considers only the areas located within a 1 1/2 mile radius, to be located within the service area of our station. This criterion places all of the property south of Moonlight Drive and north of McKercher Boulevard outside of the service area of our existing fire station.

In 1997, these lost points were negligible because much of the area was undeveloped, and only developed areas are included in the percentage of property located outside of the service area versus that which is located within the service area. Over the past nine years, significant development has occurred in these areas and has significantly altered this percentage. While IS&R doesn't divulge the process used to determine the percentage of properties located within and outside these service areas, we do have a good idea of how this is accomplished. By our estimates, we have determined that this percentage has more than doubled from 10% of structures located outside the service area in 1997 to approximately 27%

While there are numerous other factors that comprise the Protection Class Rating as mentioned above, the increase in this percentage is what we are most worried about impacting out Class 4 rating. A drop rating to a Class 5 rating is estimated to result in an increase in cumulative fire insurance costs *exceeding \$1 million dollars per year*, each and every year. This, combined with the fact that we are due for a re-evaluation of our rating within the next year, adds considerable urgency to the need to construct a fire station that will include as much developed land located outside the existing "service area" into and area with fire station coverage.

**What about coordinating emergency response, or merging the Hailey Fire Department with the other departments in the area to eliminate the need of this station?**

The southern portion of the Wood River Valley is currently protected by the Bellevue and Hailey city fire departments. For taxing reasons, the unincorporated areas surrounding the two cities are protected by the Wood River Fire Protection District. While the Wood River FPD currently operates two stations within Hailey, neither of these two stations are located within the areas needed to include the south Woodside area that we are concerned with.

The option to consolidate the Hailey Fire Department with the Wood River Fire Protection district and/or Bellevue has been proposed and studied many times over the past 16 years. And while many strides have been taken to assure the best possible response is provided to the entire community of the Wood River Valley, existing state laws have made it financially unfeasible to merge, consolidate or create a "super" district that encompasses the Hailey, Bellevue and surrounding unincorporated areas, without increasing the average amount that a Hailey citizen will be charged for a similar level of service by a factor of 3-6 times their existing costs. See Attachment

Until a feasible method of legally consolidating or contractually combining these departments is identified, our local fire departments have continually developed many agreements and cooperative ventures that utilize the equipment and talent of each department. Existing agreements include:

- Automatic aid agreements that respond predestinated emergency equipment for any agency based on the type of call without any time delay.
- Mutual aid agreements that provide the capabilities to give or receive additional support from any fire department in the county (or state), without cost to the department who is requesting aid.
- Hailey, Ketchum and Wood River Fire Agencies currently comprise the Blaine County Hazardous Materials Response Team, and are committed to respond anywhere within the region to assist in the mitigation of a hazardous materials release.
- The Hailey Fire Department currently maintains a multi-casualty emergency response trailer that can treat and provide care for over 75 persons. This unit is available for response anywhere it is needed.
- All of the area fire departments have been working to develop a county wide training center dedicated to fire and rescue training.
- All of the fire agencies located in the county cooperate and coordinate fire and EMS training courses, which provides consistent and uniform standards of operation throughout the valley.

While the seamless operation of the 5 departments operating in the Wood River Valley has not yet been achieved, continuing progress is being made in this area. The Hailey and Wood River Fire Protection District have held several meetings to coordinate the locations of fire stations in the Hailey area to eliminate the redundancy of existing stations. The possible solutions include options such as future consolidation, shared facilities or long term lease arrangements as needed.

Regardless of the achievements that have been made in this area, or what can be accomplished in the future, none of these options solve the immediate need of a station that is located in the Woodside area.

**Q. What do you mean that the fire station can be built without any net increase of my taxes?**

A. The average homeowner would see any increase in their overall tax bill that is attributed to this construction project. If successful, the proposed bond would replace the existing bond which expires in 2008, that was issued to pay for the existing city hall. The bond would raise approximately 2.3 million dollars for the construction costs. The \$65 that is currently being paid by the average Hailey Taxpayer would continue to pay for the New Bond. No additional taxpayer funds are anticipated to be needed. As new homes are built in Hailey, the cost of the bond would decrease, as the cost would be shared by the newcomers.

**Q. Where would the remaining funds that are needed for the cost of construction come from?**

A. We are proposing that these funds can come from a variety of other sources that do not affect your tax bill. These sources may include impact fees from new development, annexation fees of areas into the city, State and local grants , Local Options Tax (LOT) monies etc.

**Q. What would happen to the existing Hailey Fire Station? Could it be sold to help offset the expense of the new station?**

A. The Countryside Station **is not** intended to replace our existing station, but is a part of a master plan to construct new fire stations in the valley to better serve the emergency needs of our citizens. As these new stations are constructed, the older existing stations of our local departments can be sold or removed, to eliminate the existing redundancy of station location. It is anticipated that when a future WRF&R/HFD shared station is constructed in the northern section of the city center, that our existing station, as well as the two existing Wood River Fire & Rescue stations may be demobilized. Any proceeds from these properties may be used to finance the construction of this station. In the interim, the existing station will continue to sever the needs of the central and northern portions of the city.

**Q. Where can I get additional information?**

A. Please feel free to attend on of the several open house sessions to be held over the next several weeks. Please feel free to contact the Hailey Fire Station (788-3147) for a list of times and locations. If you have specific questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Chief Mike Chapman by telephone or e-mail (mchapman2@cox-internet.com) with your questions, or to make an appointment to look at the project details in depth.