

Issue / Comment	Resolution/Response
<p>1. The facts and implications of the ESD have not changed since 2022 so there is no compelling reason to support it now.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>The situation today is more urgent than it was 2 years ago while growth in our area continues at a rapid pace. Volunteers are overwhelmed by increased call volume, area traffic, population, etc. without an increase in volunteer availability. Funding is less than operating expenses. Cash reserves are being drained. The BVFD volunteers and directors are doing all they can to prevent a tragic outcome if the level of response is reduced. The factors that made the creation of an ESD desirable in 2022 have increased to compel a transition to paid staff at BVFD. That transition drives the creation of an ESD to establish an enabling, reliable funding source.</p>
<p>2. It appears that special interest groups want this on the May 2025 ballot to give it a greater chance of passing than it would in a November election when a larger group of voters go to the polls.</p>	<p>The ESD initiative is being targeted for May 2025 election, because the situation with BVFD is urgent and needs to be addressed ASAP. A solution is needed now. The timing also complies with the timing expectations laid out in the controlling statutes.</p> <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE TITLE 9. SAFETY SUBTITLE B. EMERGENCIES <a href="#">CHAPTER 775. EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICTS</a> Sec. 775.018. ELECTION. (a) On the granting of a petition, the commissioners court shall order an election to confirm the district's creation and authorize the imposition of a tax not to exceed the rate allowed by <a href="#">Section 48-e</a>, Article III, Texas Constitution.</p> <p>...</p> <p>(e) The election shall be held on the first authorized uniform election date prescribed by the Election Code that allows sufficient time to comply with other requirements of law.</p>
<p>3. Before citizens are forced to vote on an ESD, give the county time to run the survey, analyze the results and educate voters on the issues around forming and funding an ESD</p>	<p>It is uncertain when the County's Survey will be conducted. Many residents in the service area have been contacted and their concerns about emergency services were collected. Meanwhile, the situation with BVFD is urgent and needs to be addressed ASAP. A solution is needed now. The creation of an ESD does not preclude the County's ability to conduct a survey. In fact, if the result of the survey indicated a requirement for additional emergency response funding in the County, a replicable working ESD model could be the quickest option to achieve that goal.</p>

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<p>4. It is expensive to run a special election in May which voters will have to fund that could be as much as \$25K.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>The Texas election process is well regulated. That forces certain expenses. It is true that a single-item election costs ~\$25,000. The first Saturday in May is a Uniform Election Day in Texas. In odd numbered years, counties can hold special elections on those days in addition to other elections required by the state. Kendall County will be running an election on May 03, 2025 for multiple ballot items. Since an election is already slated, the addition of the ESD ballot measure can be done cost effectively. For example, a two-item election costs ~\$30,000 total.</p> <p>See: <a href="#">Election Code Link</a></p>
<p>5. Every year, Kendall County directs more money to all six Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) in Kendall County, as well as to the Boerne Professional Fire Department, to assist with capital and operational expenses.</p>	<p>The County contribution to BVFD has historically been ~ 1/3 of BVFD annual operating expenses. Each year BVFD requests additional County funding. Requests have always been denied. This level of funding is many times less than the amount required to hire full-time paid Firefighters. This is an example of how the cost to operate effective emergency response systems will continue to escalate. An ESD is an option to provide that funding for a local area where the specific tax revenue is generated.</p>
<p>6. The County has budgeted for four (4) full-time firefighters that may respond as needed to assist the County VFD's with dedicated onsite coverage. As of today, the BVFD is not participating in this program, despite the county's offer to place two of these firefighters in the Bergheim station. BVFD is turning down paid county firefighting resources for their station, yet they claim that they don't have enough firefighters.</p>	<p>The County suspended deployment of Firefighters at BVFD in November 2023. No County Firefighters have been deployed since then.</p> <p>Standard fire response practices indicate that four positions need to be funded, i.e., that means eight full-time firefighters, to allow for daily around-the-clock coverage. For two active responders in immediate danger to life and health situations, you are required to have two responders on stand-by for rescue purposes.</p> <p>See the summary section of 29 CFR Parts 1910 and 1926 at <a href="#">CFR OSHA Link</a> and <a href="#">NFPA 1710</a></p>
<p>7. This is in addition to the current county tax of \$0.3827 per \$100 (e.g. \$1MM property = \$3,827) of assessed property values, some of which goes to support county-wide VFDs.</p>	<p>The petitioning residents of the service area believe emergency response services need to be better resourced and are prepared to pay an increased self-imposed, self-controlled tax.</p>

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<p>8. Like many in our community, one good thing about reaching the age of 65 is the fact that your property taxes are subject to freezing! Special taxing districts such as this ESD are not subject to freezing. As the market value assessed on your property continues to increase, your ESD taxes will also increase based on the higher assessed property values.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>We are supportive of this exception and know that some ESDs have implemented it. How the ad valorem tax is managed in the ESD Service Area has not been determined. This issue will be part of the discussion concerning ESD implementation practices between the ESD Commissioners and the Commissioners Court.</p>
<p>9. The ESD will be governed by five commissioners appointed by the Kendall County Commissioners Court. That means taxpayers will be giving an enormous amount of power to a group of individuals that are not elected nor removed by the citizens paying for the ESD. This is legally equivalent to creating a new MUD or school district with full taxing authority.</p>	<p>The ESD Commissioners are appointed by and are responsible to the County Commissioners Court for budget and tax rate approval. They must be at least 18 years old, a Texas resident and a qualified voter or property taxpayer in the Service Area. They are also accountable as neighbors or business partners to Service Area residents. ESDs are required by law to file an Annual Report with the Texas Department of Agriculture by January 1st of each year.</p> <p>See: <a href="#">Link to ESD Statute</a></p>

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<p>10. Less than 10 percent of all runs by the Bergheim VFD are to fight fires. The vast majority (over 50%) of their runs are to accompany EMS vehicles in the event the firefighters are needed for rescue or assistance. The rest of their calls are mainly public assistance, service calls or false alarms.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>BVFD follows the practice that is mutually agreed by all fire chiefs in Kendall County where firefighter first responders are dispatched to all EMS calls as immediately available critical support staff. All county fire departments also adhere to mutual aid agreements for high resource demand incidents.</p> <p>It is not unusual for BVFD to arrive on scene <i>before</i> EMS (Ambulance). Medically qualified BVFD Responders begin lifesaving procedures immediately upon arrival. EMS (Ambulance) are not always available to respond immediately to medical emergencies (e.g., all EMS Ambulances may already be engaged with other calls). EMS (Ambulance) may not be able to begin patient treatment immediately on arrival (ex. BVFD Responders may have to secure the scene and conduct rescue/extrication procedures before EMS (Ambulance) personnel may begin treatment).</p> <p>BVFD service area residents expect the maximum possible response to all calls for emergency services. Arbitrarily restricting BVFD Responders from responding to all 911 calls will inevitably delay response and risks patient care. Mischaracterizing the work of the BVFD does disservice to both our firefighters and the community they serve. The focus should remain where it belongs, ensuring rapid, professional, and life-saving emergency response for all.</p>

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<p>11. The Bergheim VFD sends out a fire department crew and vehicle most every time there is an ambulance call. They are also backfilling for Boerne's paid firefighters when Boerne doesn't have enough manpower to man the station. No wonder BVFD claims they don't have enough staff!</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>BVFD follows the practice that is mutually agreed by all fire chiefs in Kendall County where firefighter first responders are dispatched to all EMS calls as immediately available critical support staff. All county fire departments also adhere to mutual aid agreements for high resource demand incidents.</p> <p>It is not unusual for BVFD to arrive on scene <i>before</i> EMS (Ambulance). Medically qualified BVFD Responders begin lifesaving procedures immediately upon arrival. EMS (Ambulance) are not always available to respond immediately to medical emergencies (e.g., all EMS Ambulances may already be engaged with other calls). EMS (Ambulance) may not be able to begin patient treatment immediately on arrival (ex. BVFD Responders may have to secure the scene and conduct rescue/extrication procedures before EMS (Ambulance) personnel may begin treatment).</p> <p>BVFD service area residents expect the maximum possible response to all calls for emergency services. Arbitrarily restricting BVFD Responders from responding to all 911 calls will inevitably delay response and risks patient care. Mischaracterizing the work of the BVFD does disservice to both our firefighters and the community they serve. The focus should remain where it belongs, ensuring rapid, professional, and life-saving emergency response for all.</p>

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<p>12. In essence, taxpayers and supporters are paying for firefighters to be Emergency Medical Service assistants. This is an important point because the County already pays for EMS personnel, and all residents of the county share that tax burden. When an ESD is formed, then only those few residents in that district will bear the burden of paying for professional firefighters who are really acting as EMS personnel.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>BVFD follows the practice that is mutually agreed by all fire chiefs in Kendall County where firefighter first responders are dispatched to all EMS calls as immediately available critical support staff. All county fire departments also adhere to mutual aid agreements for high resource demand incidents.</p> <p>It is not unusual for BVFD to arrive on scene <i>before</i> EMS (Ambulance). Medically qualified BVFD Responders begin lifesaving procedures immediately upon arrival. EMS (Ambulance) are not always available to respond immediately to medical emergencies (e.g., all EMS Ambulances may already be engaged with other calls). EMS (Ambulance) may not be able to begin patient treatment immediately on arrival (ex. BVFD Responders may have to secure the scene and conduct rescue/extrication procedures before EMS (Ambulance) personnel may begin treatment).</p> <p>BVFD service area residents expect the maximum possible response to all calls for emergency services. Arbitrarily restricting BVFD Responders from responding to all 911 calls will inevitably delay response and risks patient care. Mischaracterizing the work of the BVFD does disservice to both our firefighters and the community they serve. The focus should remain where it belongs, ensuring rapid, professional, and life-saving emergency response for all.</p>

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<p>13. The BVFD is trying to scare us into thinking that our homes are going to burn down because their staff is stretched too thin. However, if the VFD were not ambulance chasing, staff would be available to fight fires.</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>BVFD follows the practice that is mutually agreed by all fire chiefs in Kendall County where firefighter first responders are dispatched to all EMS calls as immediately available critical support staff. All county fire departments also adhere to mutual aid agreements for high resource demand incidents.</p> <p>It is not unusual for BVFD to arrive on scene <i>before</i> EMS (Ambulance). Medically qualified BVFD Responders begin lifesaving procedures immediately upon arrival. EMS (Ambulance) are not always available to respond immediately to medical emergencies (e.g., all EMS Ambulances may already be engaged with other calls). EMS (Ambulance) may not be able to begin patient treatment immediately on arrival (ex. BVFD Responders may have to secure the scene and conduct rescue/extrication procedures before EMS (Ambulance) personnel may begin treatment).</p> <p>BVFD service area residents expect the maximum possible response to all calls for emergency services. Arbitrarily restricting BVFD Responders from responding to all 911 calls will inevitably delay response and risks patient care. Mischaracterizing the work of the BVFD as “ambulance chasing” does a disservice to both our firefighters and the community they serve. The focus should remain where it belongs, ensuring rapid, professional, and life-saving emergency response for all.</p>
<p>14. Which provisions of the Health and Safety Code are applicable to this ESD and which of the provisions are planned for implementation?</p>	<p>The new ESD will comply with all requirements under  HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  TITLE 9. SAFETY  SUBTITLE B. EMERGENCIES  <b>CHAPTER 775 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICTS</b></p>

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<p>15. What are the detailed pro-forma capital and operating budgets for next 3 years to justify such significant increase in taxes? (e.g. How many personnel? What are the salaries by level? What are the benefit costs? How do the proposed salaries compare to other professional firefighter salaries / benefits in the area?)</p>	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>Once the ESD is approved, the consolidation and creation of this information and implementation plans are the first actions of the newly appointed ESD Commissioners. Prior to that, we are confident that with the possible ad valorem tax rates, a sufficient tax-base exists in the BVFD service area to fund the required emergency resources. The process to source those required resources is left to the ESD Commissioners.</p>														
<p>16. What grant money has been secured in the past two years?</p>	<p>BVFD pursues a variety of state, federal, institutional and private philanthropic grants. Not all grant applications are accepted. Not all requested amounts are granted. Including Grants, BVFD's revenue received from all sources is less than its total annual operating expense, resulting in a drawdown of cash reserves.</p>														
<p>17. Will the 3% early payment discount apply to ESD taxes? Is it possible to freeze property tax valuations for seniors under an ESD tax?</p>	<p>We are supportive of this exception and know that some ESDs have implemented it. How the ad valorem tax is managed in the ESD Service Area has not been determined. This issue will be part of the discussion concerning ESD implementation practices between the ESD Commissioners and the Commissioners Court.</p>														
<p>18. Who are the candidates to be nominated for the ESD board?</p>	<p>The ESD Commissioners will be appointed by the Kendall County Commissioners Court and ESD residents can provide candidate names assuming they meet the criteria per  HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  TITLE 9. SAFETY  SUBTITLE B. EMERGENCIES  <a href="#">CHAPTER 775 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICTS</a>  Sec. 775.034. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD IN DISTRICT LOCATED WHOLLY IN ONE COUNTY.</p>														
<p>19. What is the breakdown of all call numbers by type for 2024?</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Rescue &amp; EMS</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public Assist</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service Call</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>False Alarm</td> <td>9 %</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fire</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hazardous Conditions (No Fire)</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>533 Total Calls</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>See: <a href="#">BVFD Run Link</a></p> <p>It's a good comparison to look at the posted statistics for Boerne Fire Department. See: <a href="#">Boerne Run Link</a></p>	Rescue & EMS	48%	Public Assist	25%	Service Call	10%	False Alarm	9 %	Fire	6%	Hazardous Conditions (No Fire)	2%	533 Total Calls	
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20. What is the detailed data for only runs inside District 1?	<p><b>Note: Clickable links provided in red text.</b></p> <p>The vast majority of BVFD call responses are within the BVFD service area. BVFD also occasionally responds to calls outside its service area when another VFD, Fire Department, or Dispatch requests "Mutual Aid: This is standard operating procedure for all VFDs.</p>
21. In 2024, how many runs were first responder calls and to what districts? On the first responder calls, what was the average number of people who responded? How many of those calls had patient care administered prior to EMS arrival?	<p>BVFD responds to all calls for emergency services in the area. The number of responders is dependent on the nature of the emergency, and the availability of Volunteers. BVFD often arrives on scene and begins lifesaving patient treatment before Ambulance. This is due to Ambulance response time, Ambulance being tied up on other calls, Ambulance in transit to Hospital, motor vehicle accidents requiring stabilization and/or extraction, hazardous scene management, multiple casualty emergencies, etc. Residents want more response to calls for emergency services - not less.</p>
22. If taxpayers believe greater investments should be made in firefighting, then why doesn't the county form one or two ESDs across the entire county so all taxpayers share equitably in the tax burden? Especially since these VFD's don't just provide services within their districts. They help across the county.	<p>BVFD believes that the formation of an ESD is the best solution to addressing the urgency of providing additional emergency services resources in the Bergheim area. It would be advantageous to Kendall County to study the operation of a working ESD as a template for expanding to other areas of the county as the need arises.</p>

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