

## **82% Increase in Property Taxes Proposed by Timberlake Fire District**

Timberlake Fire is planning to run a special election to increase their portion of your property taxes by a whopping 82%, which would make their rate the highest in Kootenai County. If the levy passes, the district will be able to spend \$82,000 to hire an assistant chief and \$59,000 for a maintenance technician. According to Chief Krill, this new employee will keep track of the maintenance records for the district and do some light duty service work. Why does Timberlake want a maintenance technician when the much larger districts don't have one? Do we even need an assistant chief in such a small fire district?

An even better question is "how are Timberlake funds currently being spent?" The Board Members gave the chief a \$14,000 raise this summer, and now his total compensation is close to \$100,000, including benefits. The district has a very elaborate website. I looked at the cost and was shocked to find that last month's maintenance and hosting cost was over \$4,960.00, and that was just the September bill! It would seem to me that there are far more important things to spend your tax dollars on than a fancy website.

There is a Timberlake Commissioner election next Tuesday, with two candidates running for each seat. No incumbents are running for their seat this time. Marty Fish is running against Monty Aarestad for the District 2 seat, and David "Rudy" Rudebaugh is running against Phyllis Page for the seat in District 4. I have serious questions about the real motives of Aarestad and Page, as Monty is a former fire district employee who was fired along with Phyllis Page's husband. Shortly after the firing, a statement was made that candidates would run every time there was a position up for election until the board was completely changed. We need good people who want to run for the right reasons, not because they have a chip on their shoulder.

Monty Aarestad (running for the District 2 seat against Marty Fish) claims to live in District 2 as is required to run for the position, but in 2006 he moved out of District 2 and transferred his homeowner's exemption to his new home in District 4. My question is "how can Monty even be eligible to run in District 2?" Per state law, a person is only eligible to run in the district where their homeowner's exemption is filed, and so he would only be eligible to run in District 4.

A better choice for District 2 is Marty Fish. Marty is a former EMT with extensive Fire Science college courses and training, including Administration and Procedure, HAZ-MAT fire suppression, etc. After talking with Marty, I was very impressed with his desire to make sure that the district works harder to live within the current tax revenue rather than asking the taxpayers for more dollars, especially in this economy.

In District 4, David "Rudy" Rudebaugh, who owns Victory Auto Parts and Solid Rock Solutions in Athol is running against Phyllis Page. If elected, Rudy will bring a strong business management background to the board and tighten the district's financial belt, instead of rubber stamping the district budget as others have clearly been doing.

Sincerely,

Larry Spencer 16949 E Perimeter Rd Athol, Id