

## Why Change?

ESDs, as they currently exist, are not sustainable long term due to: a limited-funding tax base (10 cents per \$100 of property value), population growth and annexations. We should review a unified County system with the following options:

- 1) A system that uses performance-based contracting between the County and each ESD for fire services only,
- 2) A County-run system that serves as a fire-based EMS system,
- 3) A fire-metro system combining AFD and ESDs,
- 4) An authority combining all public safety agencies in Travis County under one tax rate,
- 5) A fire-based EMS system between Small Cities and ESDs,
- 6) An overlay ESD for the entire County, or
- 7) A regional system with outside counties around us.

County municipalities will continue to annex areas in the County, causing more funding drain on the County and the ESDs. Better coordination is needed in the future to limit the impact to those who are left after the annexation.

Some County municipalities are growing in population and service demand while some ESDs are shrinking in both funding tax base and service delivery capabilities. Discussions are currently underway with a few of the larger municipalities to try and balance the cost of service for both fire and emergency medical services delivery in their areas.

County EMS stations have low-utilization percentages, with five out of 10 stations below 10 percent utilization. The current zone work between the County and the City of Austin can assist in the establishment of better locations and better use of County units.

EMS ground units, which are called to box alarms, are demanding on County units and should be reviewed to determine if better utilizations are achievable.

The County has no ground Advanced Life Support (ALS) personnel except in ambulances and commander vehicles. ESD No. 6 has recently implemented a part-time ALS Squad service.

City of Austin EMS cost of service is a short-term and long-term concern since we have seen a 3 percent increase in salaries each year. EMS paramedics recently achieved civil service status by the voters this past November, which could increase salaries in our FY14 interlocal with the City of Austin. The FY14 interlocal should be written as a performance-based agreement and not just financial and operational requirements.

Our need for change gives us the opportunity to improve the system by working together, without the fear of change. We should review alternative methods of service to improve County medical response (ALS Squads, auto aid on the borders, paramedics on engines in high-service demand areas). Additionally, we should implement joint-venture services (hazmat, auto aid) and systems (data warehouse) County-wide when possible. Together, we can better serve our communities.