



Leon County

Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 606-5302 www.leoncountyfl.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 29, 2009

CONTACT: Jon D. Brown
Public Information Officer
(850) 606-5300

Enhanced Fire/EMS Service Delivery Coming in October

Leon County Chairman Bryan Desloge and Tallahassee City Commissioner Andrew Gillum held a press conference Tuesday to discuss Fire/EMS functional consolidation and enhanced service delivery as it relates to the fire services fee.

The two elected leaders were appointed by their respective commissions to evaluate and recommend how services could be provided when the contract for fire services ended in June. Currently, the City provides fire services countywide, and the County provides Emergency Medical Services countywide.

The two commissions recently approved a new inter-local agreement that will provide residents throughout Leon County with enhanced fire-rescue and emergency medical services. Of particular interest to residents living in unincorporated areas of Leon County is the addition of first-response personnel at Leon County's five rural fire stations, and the addition of one firefighter/emergency medical technician to each rural station will result in a total of 18 new responders.

Currently two personnel are assigned to these stations per shift. An additional firefighter would allow full utilization of all equipment at the station. At present, the fire engine / water tanker cannot be deployed when an emergency medical call comes in and such calls require both of the existing personnel to respond. The agreement will help to bring about greater efficiency.

To support these critical public services, a countywide fire services fee will be implemented beginning October 1. Residents in unincorporated Leon County receiving any City utility service will now pay for these enhanced public-safety services via their City utility bill. Unincorporated residents who are not on City utilities will receive a new quarterly invoice in the mail for fire services.

The fee will be based on residents' proximity to fire stations and varies depending on a few factors.

(More)

The residential fee will be split into two categories based on residents' proximity to fire stations: Zone 1 and Zone 2.

Zone 1 includes all businesses and residences within five miles of two or more core fire stations, which is predominately in the areas closest to the urban core of the city, and Zone 2 would include all other properties. Zone 1 residents will pay \$44.75 quarterly per single family residential, and Zone 2 residents will pay \$40.25 quarterly per single family residential. A map is available online at Talgov.com and LeonCountyFL.gov.

For non-residential units, the rates are based on square footage and on the following categories: Commercial, Industrial/warehouse and Non-Government institution. Places of worship associated with religious institutions will be exempt.

"We understand that these are tough times for everyone," said Leon County Administrator Parwez Alam. "Leon County continues to work hard to maintain the leanest budget possible – with the least burden on our taxpayers – while delivering the highest quality service in the most fair and equitable manner."

When compared to Florida's other 66 counties, year in and year out Leon County has one of the lowest budgets per capita, one of the lowest property tax growth rates and ranks one of the lowest in employees per capita.

"Providing the most effective and highly coordinated first-response system is one of the most important things that we do, and this fee allows us to provide these critical services in your most crucial time of need," said County Commission Chairman Bryan Desloge. "We believe we have crafted a common sense agreement where we will offer even stronger services in the unincorporated areas of the County, as well as use existing stations and technology for both fire and EMS."

###