

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

about
Comal County ESD2's

Emergency Medical Service Election

**Saturday
May 9**



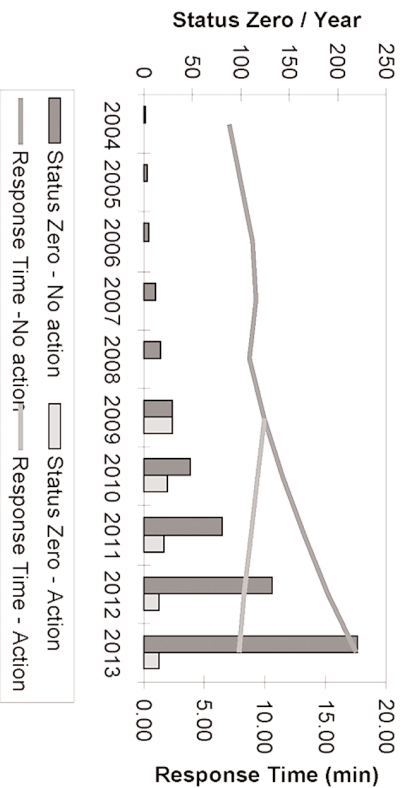
Comal County Emergency Services District No. 2
PO Box 2140
Canyon Lake, TX 78133.

Information: 830-907-2922

PRESORTED FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN, TEXAS
PERMIT NO. 1

VOTE SATURDAY, MAY 9, IN THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ELECTION

Para obtener una copia de esta informacion traducida en Español, favor de llamar a telefonono 830-907-2922



To maintain its current level of ambulance services, Comal County ESD#2 has called a May 9 election to go above its current 2-cents-per-\$100 tax rate ceiling. Although the ballot will say 10-cents-per-\$100, the maximum allowed under the state constitution, ESD#2 commissioners have pledged that the increase will be kept to 4.5 cents per \$100 for the next two years.

Where to vote

EARLY VOTING

10am-6pm Weekdays April 25-May 5
Community Resource
& Recreation Center (CRRC)
Sattler Activity Building
1941 FM 2673, Sattler

ELECTION DAY

7am-7pm, Saturday, May 9
Community Resource
& Recreation Center (CRRC)
Sattler Activity Building
1941 FM 2673, Sattler

Q: What are residents of the Emergency Services District voting on May 9?

A: Voters in Comal County Emergency Services District No. 2 will decide whether to allow the District to go above its current tax rate of 2 cents per \$100 of property value.

Q: What is Comal County Emergency Services District No. 2?

A: Comal County ESD#2 is the grassroots government responsible for providing ambulance and emergency medical service to a 250 square-mile area in northern Comal County. The District is overseen by a Board of Commissioners, all residents and taxpayers in the District. The Board is appointed by the Comal County Commissioners Court, but the District is not a part of county government. Comal County ESD No. 3, which is separate and contiguous, is responsible for fire protection and operates Canyon Lake Fire/EMS.

Q: Why does ESD#2 need the money?

A: After 17 years of operating at – or below – its tax ceiling of 2 cents per \$100, ESD#2 is faced with new challenges to maintain the high level of service it provides its citizens.

ESD#2 wants to be able to pay for additional staffing at the new Island View station, scheduled to open later this year. It also wants to add and equip a new ambulance and fund increased operating costs.

Currently ESD#2 raises about \$500,000 in taxes on its 2-cents-per-\$100-rate. The ESD#2 board has pledged that if voters approve the increase in its tax ceiling, barring unforeseen emergencies, it will not raise the tax rate above 4.5 cents per \$100 for the next two years. That will bring in another \$625,000 annually.

A home on the tax rolls for \$100,000 would see an annual ESD#2 tax increase of just more than \$2 a month.

Each emergency medical technician adds about \$60,000 to the budget for salary and benefits. For continued ‘round-the-clock coverage, ESD#2 will need to add six EMTs at a cost of \$360,000. That leaves \$265,000 to purchase a new ambulance and the sophisticated equipment inside it and to cover rising expenses. The District also wants to renovate its Sattler station.

Q: What sophisticated equipment?

A: When you call for a Canyon Lake Fire/EMS ambulance, you’re getting more than a ride to the hospital. The concept is a “Mobile ICU” that can begin treating you as soon as the doors close.

It’s widely known that in the event of a heart attack or stroke, minutes can make the difference between successful recovery and death. Canyon Lake ambulances feature Heart Alert which transmits a wide array of patient information to the destination hospital.

That way, when you get to the hospital with a time-sensitive condition, you can skip the emergency room and go directly to the operating room. A similar Stroke Alert is also in development.

Q: Why do they need a new ambulance with crew and equipment?

A: One word: Time.

ESD#2’s current service level gets an ambulance to you, on average, in ten minutes or less. Growth in our area means there are more calls for medical help and there’s more traffic to delay the ambulance. Right now, ESD#2 answers 6 calls a day on average, and the pace is increasing.

That can lead to a condition called “**Status Zero,**” when no ambulances are available if a call comes in. Then, ESD#2 must turn to neighboring ambulance services, and that means even longer waits – up to an hour – between the time you call 9-1-1 and the time help arrives.

Q: Doesn’t the District bill for its ambulance service?

A: Yes; it receives about \$475,000 a year. ESD#2 policy calls for this to be used to replace medical consumables – such as drugs and one-use medical equipment.

Because time matters, and the ESD is fairly removed from hospitals, Canyon Lake Fire/EMS must be prepared for a variety of lifesaving treatments during transport. EMTs are trained in 83 medical procedures. Each ambulance carries 43 different pharmaceuticals. All those drugs have expiration dates and must be replaced regularly at substantial cost.

Recognizing taxpayers’ contributions, ESD#2 does not bill residents of the District for insurance copayments, saving hundreds of dollars for each resident who becomes a patient. Without additional revenues, though, ESD#2 may have to review that policy.

Q: Won’t growth in the tax base (as more people move in) add more money?

A: The growth in the property tax base has not always kept up with the demand for service. In 2008, EMS calls rose about 17 percent. Our calls this year are already up 25 percent.

Many jurisdictions are preparing for a drop in their tax base with the national economic downturn. The houses may not be worth as much, but the people in them still call for ambulances. ESD#2 wants to be able to answer those calls.