



Hebgen Basin Fire District

P.O. Box 1508 • West Yellowstone, Montana 59758 • Phone: (406) 646-9094 • Fax: (406) 646-9090

January 21, 2025

To: Voters and Taxpayers of Hebgen Basin Rural Area

RE: Creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District

Background

In 2009, the Hebgen Basin Rural Fire District annexed in the Town of West Yellowstone creating one fire district within the basin to provide Fire, EMS and Rescue services within the Hebgen Basin. From 2009-2020 our call volume was about the same every year. In 2021 our call volumes jumped approximately 27% and then leveled off until 2024 when it increased an additional 12%. To meet the increase in call volume needs has required us to increase staffing. The call volume has consistently been 75% tourist, 25% local.

To meet the ongoing and future needs of the Fire District a funding mechanism is required to shift the cost for services from property owners and taxpayers of the community to the tourists who are consuming the biggest portion of our services.

Purpose and Process for Creation of Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area and Tax District.

In May of this year, I took it upon myself and the Fire District, to lead the charge in creating a Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area and Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District which has been a multistep process.

1. We needed to create a petition. The petition states: **It is the goal of establishing a Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area and Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District is to help shift the burden for Fire, EMS from Taxpayers to tourism which is the number one consumer of Fire, EMS and Medical Services within the community. Excess funding generated could be used for Educational and Community Impact needs.** The map for the proposed District is the same as the Fire District except for the Town of West Yellowstone.
2. We collected signatures from over 15% of registered voters to get the issue placed on the ballot.
3. We had to have a Qualified Designation Study Completed by The Montana Department of Commerce. That study was completed and approved, and we received the Qualified Designation.

YOUR ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED

On May 6th you will be asked to vote on 2 questions in a Special Election.

Question 1. For the Creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area? Yes/No

Question 2. For the Creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District? Yes/No

We need you to vote yes to both questions. Upon creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area and the creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District, the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District will set a 3% Resort Rural Area Tax fee on the retail value of goods and services sold within the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area District by hotels, motels, other lodging or camping facilities, restaurants, convenience stores, other public establishments that serve beer, wine, liquor, or other alcoholic beverages by the drink, dispensaries, other recreational facilities, and on all luxuries to become effective June 15, 2025, for (20) years to fund tourism related impacts for Fire, EMS and Medical Services within the area.

The yes vote to the creation of the Hebgen Basin Rural Resort Area Tax District gives local control of the funds collected to a board of local elected officials from the rural area to determine where the money should be best spent. Examples of who could benefit, Hebgen Basin Rural Fire District, Hebgen Basin Hospital District, Billings Clinic, Better Mental Health for the Community, West Yellowstone School, and other Community impacted needs.

Impacts to My Taxes

A YES vote will Not increase your property taxes.

A YES vote will add a 3% tax for the items mentioned above to the tourists in the rural area, just like the Town of West Yellowstone has had within the city limits since 1986.

Please vote YES on this very important issue to move the tax burden from property owners to the tourists who are consuming the biggest part of our services.

Thank you for reading and if you have any questions, please feel free to call the Fire Department at 406-646-9094 or email me at sgrube@hbrfd.com and I would be happy to answer all your questions.



Shane Grube
Fire Chief