



Columbia County Voter's Pamphlet

# Primary Election May 21, 2024



## ATTENTION

This is the beginning of your county voters' pamphlet. The county portion of this joint voters' pamphlet is inserted in the center of the state portion. Each page of the county voters' pamphlet is clearly marked with a shaded bar on the outside edge. All information contained in the county portion of this pamphlet has been assembled and printed by Columbia County Elections.

Selected portions of this county voters' pamphlet are available in Simplified Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These translations can be found online at [oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)

本县选民手册的部分内容提供简体中文版本。可以访问[oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)获取译本。

주 유권자 팸플릿의 선택된 부분은 한국어 준비되어 있습니다. 번역은 온라인 [oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)에서 찾아볼 수 있습니다.

Отдельные части брошюр избирателей этого округа доступны на русском языке. С данными переводами можно ознакомиться в Интернете по адресу: [oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)

Algunas secciones de este folleto para votantes del condado están disponibles en español. Estas traducciones están disponibles en línea en [oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)

Các phần được chọn trong tập thông tin cử tri quận này có bản ngôn ngữ tiếng Việt. Bản dịch có thể xem trực tuyến tại [oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP](https://oregonvotes.gov/ColumbiaVP)



Dear Columbia County Voters:

The Columbia County Voters' Pamphlet is published to inform voters with regard to the local candidates and measures you will find on your ballot. It is also an opportunity to pass on to you some important information regarding the May 21, 2024 Primary Election.

- **Primary Election.** This election serves a variety of purposes. While all voters will be able to vote on applicable non-partisan offices, this election also functions as the nominating election for major party candidates. The ballot you receive will have been tailored to the party with which you have a registered affiliation. If you are registered non-affiliated or a member of an Oregon minor political party, you will receive a nonpartisan ballot.
- **Ballot mailing dates.** Ballot packets will be mailed out to the county at large May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Expect to see your ballot during the week of May 5<sup>th</sup> -May 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **Voter no longer at your address.** If a ballot was delivered to your residence for someone who should no longer be receiving ballots at your address, please write "RETURN" on the envelope and place it back in your mailbox. If a ballot was sent to someone who has passed away, please write "DECEASED" on the envelope, and place it back in the mailbox.
- **Ballot Arrangement.** Candidates are arranged in a random alphabetical order each election. Candidates will be listed in the same order in this pamphlet as on the ballot. Only the applicable candidates and measures for your precinct and registered residential address will appear on your ballot.
- **Contact your Elections office.** If you have questions or require assistance, please contact Columbia County Elections at (503) 397-7214 or email us at: [elections@columbiacountyor.gov](mailto:elections@columbiacountyor.gov).

**Make sure your vote counts!** Be sure to sign the attestation on your ballot return envelope and return promptly. Unsigned or late ballot return envelopes cannot be counted, but timely, signed ones can be. Ballots must be deposited in a County Elections Dropbox no later than 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 21, 2024, or, if mailed, must be postmarked by election day to be counted. Drop site locations are listed on the last page of this voters' pamphlet.

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your County Clerk.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Klug".

Debbie Klug  
Columbia County Clerk

# Table of contents

Letter to voters	2
Table of Contents / Voter Registration	3
<b>Candidates</b>	
Columbia County	
Commissioner, position 1	4
Commissioner, position 3	5
Justice of the Peace	5
<b>Measures</b>	
5-300 (Columbia County)	6
5-298 (City of St Helens)	6
5-299 (Columbia 911)	7
5-301 (Vernonia RFPD)	8
Ballot Return / Ballot Drop Locations	8

## PLEASE NOTE

### **Not all the candidates or measures in this Voters' Pamphlet will be on your ballot.**

The content of your ballot is determined by your registration's residential address (This can be found on your return identification envelope near the signature line). Your official ballot will contain only the candidates and issues which apply to your residence.

If your residential address is incorrect, please update your registration.

### **Not all candidates submit information for the Voters' Pamphlet.**

As a result, there will be candidates on your ballot that are not in the Voters' Pamphlet.

### **Columbia County Elections prints information as submitted.**

We do not correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, errors, or inaccurate information.

# Voter Registration

## Qualifications to register to vote

To register to vote in Oregon, you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of Oregon
- At least 16 years old

If you are not yet 18 years of age, you will not receive a ballot until an election occurs on or after your 18th birthday.

## How to register to vote

**ONLINE.** Register to vote online at [www.oregonvotes.gov/myvote](http://www.oregonvotes.gov/myvote).

**MANUALLY.** Complete an Oregon Voter Registration Card. Registration cards are available at any county elections office or at designated state agencies, including the Department of Motor Vehicles and some public assistance agencies.

## When to update your registration

Update your registration if your

- Residential address changes,
- Mailing address changes,
- Your name changes, or
- You wish to change political affiliation.

## Registration Deadline

A new registrant must register to vote by the 21st calendar day before an election to be eligible to vote in that election.

## Am I registered to vote?

If you are already registered or think you might be registered to vote, visit [www.oregonvotes.gov/myvote](http://www.oregonvotes.gov/myvote) to:

- check if you are registered to vote
- view your registration information
- update your voter registration
- find contact information for your county elections office

# Columbia County

## County Commissioner, Position 1



**Alex  
Tardif**

**OCCUPATION:** Executive Director, Columbia Pacific Food Bank

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Finance Director; County Commissioner; Tax Accountant for private sector - specializing in tax department organization, and compliance strategies; Income tax auditor State of Oregon.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Graduate of Scappoose High School. University of Portland - Bachelor in Business Administration; degree in Accounting. AOC County College. NACO Leadership Academy.

**PRIOR GOVERNMENTAL EXPERIENCE:** Columbia County Commissioner. Scappoose School Board. Tax auditor for the State of Oregon. Scappoose School Board Budget Committee.

### A Voice for Columbia County

As a fourth-generation resident and family farmer in Columbia County, I am invested in our community's well-being. I am dedicated to the community that raised and educated me, and collaborate with me. As a parent and foster parent, I advocate for a strong and inclusive environment for all residents.

### Action

As the Executive Director of the Columbia Pacific Food Bank, I serve our community through action. Through my experience as a former County Commissioner, board member, and community volunteer, I have shown my commitment to bringing people together, launching successful initiatives, and driving results. My efforts in outreach ensure that every voice is valued, with the intention that everyone feels empowered as a resident in Columbia County.

### Accountability

With a professional background in accounting and finance, I understand budgets, strategic plans, and the importance of details. I advocate for enforceable accountability and transparency. It is vital that the public is involved in decision-making as it directly impacts our communities. I believe there needs to be trust between local governments and community members in order to build an environment that prioritizes the specific needs of our area.

### Community

I am passionate about our quality of life. I will always prioritize a viable economy with local businesses, infrastructure, public services, and recreation, that collectively provide for Columbia County.

All people should have a voice in our future, and together we can foster a community that thrives.

*(This information furnished by Alex Tardif)*

**The above information has not been verified for accuracy by the county. (ORS 251.335 (3b))**

## County Commissioner, Position 1



**Margaret C  
Magruder**

**OCCUPATION:** Columbia County Commissioner; Owner/Operator, Magruder Farms

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Insulation Manufacturing Company Owner; Coordinator, LCR Watershed Council; Third Generation Columbia County Farmer; 4-H Leader; Community Volunteer; Mother; Grandmother.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** MA, Syracuse University; BA Political Science and Russian, Willamette University; Clatskanie High School Graduate.

**PRIOR GOVERNMENTAL EXPERIENCE:** Columbia County Commissioner; Precinct Committee Person; Columbia 5J School Board; Columbia County Budget Committee; Clatskanie-Quincy CPAC; Oregon Weed Board; Oregon Sheep Commission; Oregon Board of Agriculture; American Lamb Board; Columbia County Extension Budget Committee; Council of Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee; State Forest Advisory Committee.

As a Columbia County native, a farmer, and a local business owner, I have a deeply-ingrained commitment to our rural way of life. My experience and education in government affairs and finance, knowledge of natural resources, and lifelong involvement in the issues facing Columbia County provides me the background and ability to work collaboratively with fellow citizens in achieving a balance between livability and prosperity in the county we call home.

### Priorities:

**Livability:** Columbia County residents want excellent schools, beautiful parks, public safety, good roads, support for veterans, and access to other local government services. I will make these goals a priority by budgeting conscientiously, working to attract new businesses, and supporting responsible growth of new and existing businesses.

**Local Jobs:** Many county residents must commute for their work. My priority is to achieve a balance between large industries, small businesses, natural resource industries and agriculture. I will strive to bring more family-wage jobs to our county while still being conscious of our current resources and environment.

**Recreation:** We have one of the most beautiful and scenic counties in the State of Oregon. Our rivers and streams provide an abundance of recreational activities. Our trails offer access to beautiful woodlands. I will listen to the desires of our citizens and work with them to ensure that our county continues to be a great place to live and raise a family.

[www.facebook.com/MagruderforCommissioner](http://www.facebook.com/MagruderforCommissioner)

*(This information furnished by Margaret C Magruder)*

**The above information has not been verified for accuracy by the county. (ORS 251.335 (3b))**

# Columbia County

## County Commissioner, Position 3

## Justice of the Peace



**Casey  
Garrett**

**OCCUPATION:** Columbia County Commissioner

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Local Government Administration; General Contractor; Construction Project Management; Facilities Management

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Portland State University, Bachelor of Science: Major in Architecture and Project Management; Scappoose High School Graduate

**PRIOR GOVERNMENTAL EXPERIENCE:** Columbia County Board of Commissioners, Chair; Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, President; NW Area Commission on Transportation, Vice Chair; Association of Oregon Counties Governance, Revenue Steering Committee, Co-Chair; Columbia Economic Team, Board of Directors; NW Oregon Workforce Consortium, Columbia County Representative.

**Vote Casey Garrett for Columbia County Commissioner Position 3**

I have lived in Saint Helens for the past 18 years and was raised outside of Scappoose in rural Chapman. I have an amazing, supportive wife and we are blessed with two beautiful daughters, 11 and 12 years old.

We take great pride in our county's history, culture, and future potential. It is my honor to serve the residents of Columbia County and will always strive to make it an even better place to live, work and visit. With your support, I will work tirelessly to manage public resources responsibly and make the absolute most out of what we have.

My experience and background have provided me with the essential skills and abilities required to manage the wide-ranging responsibilities of a County Commissioner.

I look forward to your confidence and vote to continue to serve as a Columbia County Commissioner.

**Endorsements:**

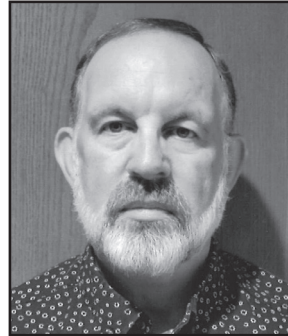
Senator Suzanne Weber, Brian Pixley, Rick Hobart, Jerry Cole, Deborah Hazen, Robert Keyser, Duane Bernard, Brian Fawcett, Meagan Fawcett, David Sass, Nick Sorber, Betsy Johnson, Mike Pihl, Henry Heimuller, Peter McHugh, Deborah McHugh, Dan Daoust, Mike Kreger, Dave Molony, Jeff Kemp, Matt Kneeland, Chopper Smart, Pacific Stainless Products Employee Association Local 304.

**Vote Casey Garrett**

[www.caseyforcommissioner.com](http://www.caseyforcommissioner.com)

*(This information furnished by Casey Garret)*

The above information has not been verified for accuracy by the county. (ORS 251.335 (3b))



**James (Jim)  
Gibson**

**OCCUPATION:** Columbia County Pro Tem Justice of the Peace, October 2021 to present; Licensed Private Investigator, February 2008 to present

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Columbia County Jail Commander, Retired 1996 to 2007; Columbia County Corrections Deputy, 1980 to 1996; Wauna Mill, Papermaker, 1975 to 1980; Columbia County Reserve Deputy, 1978 to 1980

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Oregon Judges Association, Continuing Education, 2021 to 2024; Portland Community College, Criminal Justice & Computer Technology;

**PRIOR GOVERNMENTAL EXPERIENCE:** Local Public Safety Coordinating Council, Appointed; Clatskanie Library District, Board of Directors, Elected; Clatskanie Fire District, Board of Directors, Elected; Columbia 911 District, Board of Directors, Appointed

I'm a lifelong Columbia County resident, grew up on a small farm in Alston's Comer area of Rainier, graduated from Rainier High School.

Joined Columbia County Sheriff's Reserves as Volunteer Deputy in 1978. While serving as Reserve Deputy I met St Helens Reserve Officer Leona Dougherty, in 1980 we married. We raised four children and have nine grandchildren.

Served as Volunteer Firefighter for Clatskanie Fire District in 1970's and 1980's.

I've served thirteen years on the Board of Directors for both Clatskanie Fire and Clatskanie Library Districts. After retiring from the Sheriff's Office in 2007 I became a Private Investigator. I've been a Red Cross Volunteer Disaster Responder serving in several States helping set up and run Evacuation Shelters during hurricanes, wildfires, and floods. Involvement in communities and volunteering to help others is important to me.

I've worked within the Criminal Justice system forty-six years and have the experience and training necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of Justice of the Peace. I'm honored to have been appointed Pro Tem Judge for Justice Court in 2021 at the request of Judge Diana Shera-Taylor. I pledge to do my best in serving as your elected Justice of the Peace and will treat everyone with dignity and respect while holding people accountable for their actions.

PLEASE VOTE on May 21, 2024.

*(This information furnished by James (Jim) Gibson)*

The above information has not been verified for accuracy by the county. (ORS 251.335 (3b))

# Columbia County

# City of St. Helens

## Measure 5-300

## Measure 5-298

### BALLOT TITLE

### BALLOT TITLE

#### JAIL OPERATING TAX LEVY

QUESTION: Shall Columbia County levy a tax of \$0.87/\$1000.00 of assessed value for four years beginning in FY2025 for Jail operations? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

SUMMARY: In 2014, 2017, and 2020 voters approved a jail operating levy, expiring in 2024.

The three primary funding sources for the Jail are the County's General Fund, Federal bed rentals, and the Jail Operating Tax Levy. Since 2014 the County's General Fund support for the Jail has remained consistent. However, during the pandemic Federal bed rental revenue substantially decreased and the cost to run the jail substantially increased. Jail medical costs alone increased from \$634,278 in FY19-20 to \$1,500,000 in FY24-25. The Jail has been forced to use reserve funds to cover costs since 2020. The Jail cannot fully operate without a new rate of \$0.87/\$1000.

Prior to the 2014 Levy, the County was forced to reduce Jail beds for local inmates to 25 and anticipated a full closure of the Jail without the Levy. The tax Levy at a rate of \$0.87/\$1000 will pay for continued operation of the Jail through FY2027-2028, including funding for constitutionally required food, clothing, management, and healthcare for adults in custody.

The estimated money raised will be \$5,569,309 in FY 2024-2025, \$5,804,458 in FY2025-2026, \$6,049,535 in FY2026-2027 and \$6,604,960 in FY2027-2028, for a total estimated tax Levy of \$23,728,262.

#### CREATION OF POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES STAFF FUNDING LOCAL OPTION TAX

QUESTION: Shall City assess five-year operating levy for police at rate of \$0.69 Per \$1,000 assessed value beginning 2024-2025? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

SUMMARY: The City's current tax revenues cannot support quantity of officers needed to protect and serve our city.

The City will use the levy to create an Enhanced Law Enforcement Operating Fund. This will be used exclusively for increasing law enforcement presence throughout St. Helens and increasing police officer presence within the city. This fund would add four additional officers, necessary equipment, necessary training, and enable the police to continue to provide 24/7 law enforcement coverage in St. Helens as well as reduce response times.

In order to provide these basic services, the City is requesting a new five-year levy at a rate of \$0.69 Per \$1,000 assessed property value. The City will use the tax revenue from this measure to fund additional police officers.

The levy will raise approximately \$802,077 in 2024-25; \$834,087 in 2025-26; \$867,451 in 2026-27; \$902,149 in 2027-28; and \$938,235 in 2028-29. The levy would then expire.

For a home assessed value of \$200,000 the annual cost of this levy would be an estimated \$138 per year.

The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the County Assessor at the time of the estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression, and the collection rate.

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In 1998, county voters approved a bond levy to construct a new Jail. The bond to build the new Jail was repaid in 2018. Property taxes collected to pay the bond are no longer being collected. The Jail is now 23 years old. Until 2014, Jail operations were primarily funded by the County General Fund and Jail bed rentals. However, by 2012, Jail operations became difficult to fund due to several years of decreases in the County's General Fund due to loss in federal timber funding. From 2012 to 2014, the County reduced the number of adults in custody (AICs) housed at the jail to lower operating expenses. The County force-released hundreds of AICs annually: 582 AICs were released in 2012, 791 in 2013, and 748 in 2014. Jail operations became unsustainable in 2014 and full closure of the Jail was planned. However, in 2014 voters approved a three-year Jail operating tax levy of \$0.5797 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, allowing the County to keep the Jail open. The tax levy was renewed by voters in 2017 and 2020. The tax levy will expire in 2024. Since passing this tax levy in 2014, the County has not force-release AICs. In 2023, the County booked 2,392 AICs into the Jail.

The City of St. Helens has a permanent tax rate of \$1.9078. This rate was set in 1997 and has not risen despite increases in all expenses. There is an annual cap of 3% that can be added yearly on property taxes to help these increased expenses. This is not enough to cover all services needed by our city to function.

Since 2019, the Jail has experienced steady growth in operational costs, including significant increases in medical and mental health costs (\$634,278 in FY 19-20 to \$1,500,000 in FY 24-25) and food service costs (\$372,650 in FY 19-20 to \$524,001 in FY 24-25). In addition, Jail bed rental revenue decreased substantially from 2020-2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period the County used reserve funds to bridge budget deficits and reserves are now depleted.

The City of St. Helens has less than half the national average for law enforcement coverage per person. The national average is 3.5 police officers to 1,000 citizens. The City of St. Helens is 1.38. The City of St. Helens Police Department is understaffed.

Income streams for the Jail include revenue from the General Fund, bed rentals to outside agencies, and Jail Operating taxes. The Board of County Commissioners has resolved to contribute 1 million dollars annually for Jail Operations. The County has renegotiated bed rental per-diem rates from \$92 to \$127 per night. The County is proposing a Jail Operating tax levy at \$0.87 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for four years to bridge the remaining gap for full operation of the Jail through FY2028.

Our police officers are under increasing demands due to increased population and the decriminalization of drugs. This increase in property and violent crimes severely impacts the citizens of St. Helens.

The tax levy will contribute to constitutionally required care for inmates, including food, clothing, health care, corrections deputies, and other corrections staff, in addition to facility maintenance and deferred capital projects, such as a roof replacement. The use of operating funds will continue to be monitored by a citizen committee established by the County (the "JOCAC"). In addition, the County will annually audit the use of tax levy funds for jail operations.

This measure would create an Enhanced Law Enforcement Operating Fund to be used exclusively for increasing law enforcement presence in the city. It would add four additional officers, necessary equipment, necessary training, and enable the police to continue to provide 24/7 law enforcement coverage in St. Helens as well as reduce response times.

A property owner with an assessed value of \$100,000 would pay \$87.00 annually for four years.

If approved, this levy would raise approximately \$4,343,929 for police protection services over the 5-year period.

Submitted by:  
Casey Garrett, Columbia County Board of County Commissioners, Chair

Estimated annual cost:

The approximate rate for the operating fund is \$0.69 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For a home assessed at a value of \$200,000 the annual cost of this levy would be \$138 per year or \$0.38 per day.

Submitted by:  
John Walsh, City Administrator

**NO ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST THIS MEASURE WERE FILED.**

**NO ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST THIS MEASURE WERE FILED.**

# Columbia 911 Communications District

## Measure 5-299

### BALLOT TITLE

#### RENEWAL OF 9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OPERATING FUNDS - OPTION LEVY

QUESTION: Shall the five-year Columbia 9-1-1 operating levy be renewed, at 29 cents per \$1,000 assessed value, beginning FY 2024/2025? This measure renews current local option taxes.

SUMMARY: The initial local option levy for operations for the Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District was approved by the voters in 1998, renewed in 2004, 2008, 2013 and again in 2019.

The measure, if approved, would authorize the District to levy taxes to support all ongoing functions of the 9-1-1 call center, such as maintaining emergency communications service for all communities and unincorporated areas throughout the county; 24-hour staffing and training; coordination and dispatching for all 14 public safety (Police, Fire & EMS) agencies in Columbia County, including related support services for State Police and State Forestry Department.

The measure would provide for a local option levy to support operations at a rate of \$0.29 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value within the District for five years, beginning July 1, 2024. The estimated revenue over five years is:

Fiscal Year	Estimated-Yearly Total
2024-25	\$1,884,044
2025-26	\$1,969,872
2026-27	\$2,059,611
2027-28	\$2,153,438
2028-29	\$2,251,538

Total \$10,318,503

"The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of the estimate."

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District Operating Levy is due for a five-year renewal.

#### Not an Additional Tax, But Instead a Five-Year Renewal of the Current Levy

This measure does not create an additional tax burden. Instead, it seeks a renewal of the current Operating Fund levy, which will end on June 30, 2024. The renewal measure requires approval by a majority of the voters to maintain Columbia 9-1-1 services at its current level.

#### The Unchanged Tax Rate Will Maintain Emergency Service Levels

This Operating Fund renewal measure is requested at the same tax rate approved by voters in 2019. Its passage would maintain emergency communications service operations that benefit all citizens in Columbia County.

#### Levy Renewal Rate

The Operating Fund levy renewal would be at a rate of 29 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, added to the permanent rate of 25.54 cents per \$1,000 assessed value. For a home assessed at \$100,000, the annual combined cost of the permanent and requested renewal levy would be \$54.54 per year.

#### Citizen Reliance On Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District Services

The requested five-year Operating Fund levy supports all ongoing functions of the 9-1-1 call center, such as 24-hour staffing, training, and coordination with local and state emergency operations. Renewal of the funding will maintain the current level of emergency services citizens receive. On average, the 9-1-1 call center answers about 213 calls daily and 77,899 emergency calls annually.

#### Emergency Dispatcher for All Fire, Medical, and Law Enforcement

Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District coordinates and dispatches for 16 public safety agencies in Columbia County, including all fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement departments. It also provides related support services for local State Police and State Forestry departments. On average, the dispatchers at the 9-1-1 call center handle 65,971 public safety agency calls annually.

#### Improved Communications Countywide

The Operating Fund, combined with state and federal grants, are also used to provide enhanced 9-1-1 services, including location identification capability for cell phone callers, radio/communication towers, and other essential infrastructure, including a countywide microwave radio network utilized by emergency responders.

#### Representation and Accountability

Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District is accountable to the communities it serves. A five-person Board of Directors is elected from five zones representing the entire county. The Board members manage a cost-conscious and efficient district while focusing on safety and security for all. The Board appoints five citizen members, one representing each District zone, to sit on the District's Budget Committee. Further, the District appoints an Advisory Committee that includes representatives from community public safety, fire, emergency, and law enforcement agencies in Columbia County.

Submitted by:  
Dannell Hooper, Acting Executive Director

NO ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST THIS MEASURE WERE FILED.

# Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District

## Measure 5-301

### BALLOT TITLE

RENEWAL OF CURRENT FIVE-YEAR LOCAL OPTION TAX FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**QUESTION:** Shall the District impose \$1.24 per \$1,000 assessed value for fire and emergency services staffing for five years beginning 2024/2025? This measure renews current local option taxes.

**SUMMARY:** The measure if approved will allow the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District to maintain current Fire District Staffing. The measure would provide for a 5-year local option levy at a rate of \$1.24 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value within the fire district for 5 years beginning in 2024/2025. Revenue from levy will be utilized to maintain the fire districts current staffing of 1 firefighter on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week while allowing us to continue to overcome the cost of providing services. The estimated revenue over five years is 2024-2025- \$431,742, 2025-2026- \$455,487, 2025-2026- \$480,438, 2026-2027- \$506,867, 2027-2028- \$534,744. Estimated total over the five years = \$2,409,278 This levy will renew the current local option levy set to expire in 2025. For a homeowner with a taxable assessed value of \$200,000 would pay an estimated \$248. The estimated revenue for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best available information at the time from the county.

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

#### District Overview

Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District is the smallest fire district in Columbia County, serving 36 square miles. The district continues to see high volumes of calls for service responding to 747 emergency and non emergency calls in 2023.

#### Levy Overview

In recent years, growing demands for services have put strain on the district budget, but most importantly a strain on local volunteers to answer the calls. In early 2024 the District Board of Directors voted to place a levy renewal on the May 2024 election. This renewal will continue to fund current staff positions as well as operation for an additional 5 years.

#### Why do we need a levy?

Demands for fire, emergency, and medical response are increasing across the district. The district's permanent tax rate is not able to keep pace with the rising costs of providing services. With more than 700 calls expected each year, the district is seeking funding to maintain firefighters to meet the needs of each community we serve.

#### What would the levy pay for?

The levy would fund the 3 current career firefighter positions, as well as equipment and operational costs connected to emergency and wildfire mitigation, prevention, and response.

#### How much would it cost?

If passed, the emergency services levy would provide annual funding of approximately \$431,000 at a cost of \$1.24 per \$1000 of assessed property value.

#### What happens if the levy does not pass?

If the levy does not pass, staffing will be maintained until the current levy expires in 2025. Once the levy has expired, the district will be forced to cut career firefighter positions due to a lack of funding. Further staffing and operational cuts may be required.

#### Submitted by:

Robert Davis, Acting Fire Chief

**NO ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST THIS MEASURE WERE FILED.**

## BALLOT RETURN

### You May Vote Your Ballot and Return It as Soon as You Receive It.

Ballots may be returned via mail or by drop off.

#### Return Method:

**Mail:** Return postage is prepaid. Your ballot must be postmarked Election Day. Please be aware of the USPS pick up time of the location you are using on Election Day, as only picked up ballots would receive the timely postmark.

**Drop off:** - Deliver as soon as possible to an official drop box by 8:00 pm Election Day. Ballots may be delivered to any official ballot drop box in Oregon. Ballots received in this manner after 8pm will not count.

## COLUMBIA COUNTY BALLOT DROP SITE LOCATIONS

24 Hour drop off available at all locations.

### Columbia County Courthouse

230 Strand St, St Helens

### Scappoose City Hall

33568 E. Columbia Ave

### Clatskanie Library

11 Lillich St, Clatskanie

### Rainier City Hall

106 B St West, Rainier

### Vernonia Public Library

701 Weed Ave, Vernonia

### Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD

12525 Oregon Highway 202, Mist

**END OF COLUMBIA COUNTY  
VOTER'S PAMPHLET**