



Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District

"To be a point of pride for the communities we serve."
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On September 7th and 8th Idanha Detroit Fire Protection District and its surrounding communities were devastated by two huge fires that joined together in the Detroit area. The Beechie fire started on August 16th and did a slow burn until September 7th, at which point the 70 mph east wind kicked it into high gear ultimately burning 193,573 acres most of which happened in a 48 hour period starting on September 7th. The Lionshead also started on the 16th of August burning 204,469 acres. The Lionshead ultimately burned into Detroit on the 7th and 8th of September destroying a vast majority of the City of Detroit.

Together the fires in Oregon, in September destroyed thousands of dollars' worth of taxing value for local communities. The fires also burned the pristine beauty of the upper Santiam canyon damaging the eco system and the beauty as well. It was an epic wind event.

In Detroit it is estimated that 70 percent of the taxable value was lost to the Lionshead fire and the remaining properties have been devalued due to the devastation of the community.

What this means for the Idanha Detroit Fire District is that we have only 30 percent of our taxable value left. A reduction of 70 percent of our revenue, our tax base is small to begin with. We anticipate receiving in revenue next fiscal year is \$45,000. It is impossible to operate any fire agency on this revenue and remain safe and compliant with all regulatory requirements. Not to mention paying for electricity.

Detroit Rural Fire protection District is a volunteer department with a part time chief and an office administrator. Last year we ran about 230 calls. They ranged in type from Structure fires, Water rescues. Motor vehicle crashes, hazardous materials accidents, and of course medical response. The district is 7 square miles, but we respond out of district to meet the needs of the area in total not just our district boundires. Our budget last year with grants and conservative spending was just over \$250,000.

This is not a temporal loss rather a long-term issue that will affect us for years to come. It has been five months since the burn over and the community is still just cleaning up from the fire. There still is no potable water in Detroit currently. There is some reconstruction, but it is very limited.

The impact is the same for the Fire agencies that lost revenue like Gates, Mill City, Lyons, McKenzie, North Lincoln Fire and the others is a long term revenue loss with very little capability to recover those losses.

For Idanha Detroit it means we have only enough revenue and carry over to get us to December 31 2021. Then we are out of money. We have heard about USDA and FEMA loans but the problem is that we need to be able to pay those loans back and have no capacity to do that.

As a district we are working hard to maximize our revenue and have cut spending in several areas of operations. Unfortunately, we are still required to spend money on Audits, and insurance, and PERS. We need to keep our responders safe while in the service of the district.

I am not one who is prone to crying wolf and in fact make it a point to be as self sufficient as possible while working with the tools the community provides in either funding or labor in the form of volunteer firefighting. At this juncture I am felling the weight of the impact of these fires and I know my District needs help in the form of financial assistance, I am sure the other affected districts and departments feel the same weight and responsibility. In the 41 years in the fire service this is the most dire situation I have faced on a district level.

This is no different than the national response to COVID. If we as a people can undergird Banks, airlines, restaurants, and business, it seems clear we should undergird 911 services in this great time of need.

Thank you and if there are any questions please feel free to contact me. My Email: firechieftr@gmail.com my phone if 541-270-1468

William Ewing
Fire Chief
Idanha Detroit fire

Video submitted by Chief William Ewing of Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District

Detroit Idanha Fire: <https://vimeo.com/509140620>