

Submitter: Deborah Pack  
On Behalf Of: Kellogg Rural Fire Department  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Deb Pack. I am a member of the Umpqua Community and live in the Kellogg Rural Fire District. I am testifying on behalf of the fire department in support of their efforts to build a Main Fire Station in our district - to better serve the community at large.

Kellogg Rural Fire District is unique in that there is no town or community center for it's citizens to congregate at. The Kellogg area is remote and heavily forested and has only two roads to get in and out. It is this very rural quality that poses a danger to our community. Nothing made this more evident than the Snowmagedon event that occurred in February of 2019. Within a 24 hour period, several feet of unexpected snow descended on us. As the snow came down, so did the trees - right on the power and cable lines. In addition, the Kellogg district has no cell phone service - so within a matter of hours, most of our 500 or so residents were without power, heat, water and the ability to communicate. This would be a concern in any community - but the Kellogg Rural Fire District serves a vulnerable community of citizens that average 65 years of age or more. It was several days before Public Works was able to clear the roads to town and it was 15 days before we had power and services restored.

This situation would have been a challenge to any community - but what hampered our district was the lack of a town, community center or main fire station to go to for help. A large number of our citizens were in need of food, water, medications and warmth - but had nowhere close to go, to ask for assistance. Instead, the volunteers that work for the Kellogg Rural Fire Department used their emergency radios to contact each other and to arrange for at least one of them to try to get to each and every member of the community to ascertain need, meds or emergency services that might be required. This meant driving and sometimes walking in - to every residence in the district. It was a tedious, exhausting and incredibly inefficient to triage the residents. The volunteer staff delivered water, blankets, ensured food and medications were sufficient and took names and numbers of relatives to call to ensure they were alive and well. The comment that was heard all day - every day - by the citizens of Kellogg, was that we need a full-service fire station and/or community center that we can go to in an emergency like this. A fire station would provide warmth and food and medical care and contact with the outside world, when actually driving to Roseburg was impossible.

In large part, through the efforts of Kellogg's volunteers - we survived Snowmagedon. However, the need for a main fire station that can double as an emergency command center and community gathering place still exists. It is just a matter of time before we experience a wildfire or mass casualty MVA that requires a place for OSP, DFPA, DCSO or our volunteers to report to. The best way to mitigate any unexpected disaster is to be prepared. Currently, the Kellogg Rural Fire District is not prepared for what may come down the road. The intrepid men and women that serve as volunteers for the department will give their all - but it is time that all of us do our part to give them a station that will allow them to safely serve our community to the best of their ability and to give them a home to report to for trainings, education and emergencies.

I strongly urge you to consider funding the Main Fire Station that Kellogg Rural Department is requesting. The lives and welfare of our community may very well depend on it.

Deb Pack