



DeSoto Rural Fire Protection District _____ 201 East Miller
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Fire Chief:

Paul W. Mayer

Fire Marshal:

Eldon "Bud" Smith

April 10, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission,

Initially, I want to thank you for your service to this worthy cause. Your methodical approach to insure input into a Charter for Jefferson County from all facets of government as well as the general public indicates your mission includes quality delivery of services to the residents.

As I'm sure you know, the Fire Districts of the County, through the Jefferson County Fire Protection District's Association have and will continue to be strong supporters of a sound, effective form of government. We have worked with the current County Commission to overcome obstacles and we will continue to do all we can to make sure that service to the public remains our number one priority.

Having said that, we feel it is important for the fire service of the County to have a seat at the table when discussing the future of the County. Commercial growth in the current Master Plan is encouraged around municipalities and major highways. From the standpoint of the fire service, commercial development produces significantly less volume of requests for service than residential areas but provides more tax dollars. Conversely, residential areas produce less tax dollars but a much greater number of requests and therefore, we must provide the infrastructure in residential areas to insure a timely response while making sure our commercial areas have adequate protection as well.

Building a fire station to service an area must be a practical allocation of tax payer dollars that can be sustained by the area. In the case of the DeSoto Rural Fire Protection District, we have been handicapped by the current Master Plan and the ability of the City of DeSoto to annex properties for future development of commercial and industrial complexes without a vote of the residents in the fire district. In short, while our population continues to grow in residential areas, our tax base can not keep up because we are denied the opportunity of commercial growth through annexations which the District nor its citizens have any control over. As these annexations continue to occur, more and more fire districts will be affected which will negatively impact their ability to provide services.

We believe there are solutions that would allow the Cities and the Fire Districts to continue to grow. The opportunity to work out those issues through a well written and fair Charter will improve the entire County's ability to provide emergency services and support growth for ALL entities.

In past discussions you have had with municipal leaders, one of the subjects mentioned was annexations. The intent of this statement is to make you aware of one of the difficulties that annexations currently cause and also the fact that fire district residents have no voice in these annexations. In essence, they are asked to raise taxes to offset the loss of growth which in my estimation is taxation without representation.

In closing, I would like to thank you for giving the fire service the opportunity to have input into a Charter for the County and would be proud to serve in any capacity to help the Jefferson County Charter Commission tackle this tough issue of annexations. Together I believe we can provide a solution that is beneficial to all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul W. Mayer".

Paul W. Mayer, Chief

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