

Mayor David Avila on Measure E

As a career firefighter in the Inland Empire, no one understands more than I the need to maintain a high level of paramedic services that our residents can depend upon when emergencies occur; indeed, this is central to the quality of life one experiences in any community...Yucaipa is no exception. Through the years, the City has made this a top priority; placing **Measure E** on the upcoming March 3rd ballot is in keeping with this objective.

In 1999, the City assumed the responsibility for providing Yucaipa residents with Fire and Paramedic Services that, until then, were provided through the County; these 911 services were funded through the revenue stream that came with the special assessment district (CSA 38). In 2004, Yucaipa voters passed, Measure Y, entitled: “**Paramedic Emergency Medical Services Special Tax**” to fund the City’s Paramedic Emergency Services Program; this was anticipated to fund paramedic services city-wide for approximately 10 years. Unfortunately, this Initiative DID NOT include a rate escalator to control for normal inflation.

It has now been 16 years and revenues generated through this special tax have fallen well behind the growing costs of providing the high-quality paramedic services and facilities that Yucaipa residents expect and deserve, including (but not limited to) 911 emergency response calls.

This leaves the City with three options. First, the level of emergency services presently being delivered through the City’s Paramedic Program could be cut back significantly; this simply is not an option that City officials want to embrace. Second, City officials can ask local voters to authorize a significant increase in the annual special tax; however, to make the City’s paramedic program whole, this would mean nearly doubling

the amount of the annual assessment. Here again, this is not an option that City officials want to entertain. Third, we can ask local voters to authorize a modest half-percent increase in the sales tax that is charged on purchases made within the City. This is precisely what Measure E does.

There are a host of reasons for City officials choosing this option; one of the most salient is that we see this as being far more equitable. Increasing the amount of the annual special assessment amounts to increasing property taxes. This approach (sales tax) is far more equitable and fair to all stakeholders, because paramedic services are provided not only to residents, but also to visitors to Yucaipa; it brings money into the community from outside the community, when people come to Yucaipa and purchase goods, food and services while here; and, it allows visitors to share in the cost of these services when making a 911 call while visiting Yucaipa. Equally important, this revenue stream will increase, over time, as the community grows and new business and commercial enterprise are attracted to the City; thus, eliminating the need for an annual escalator. Finally, the monies generated through this revenue stream can be used to enhance the many other services that are provided through the City; such as police and fire protection, parks and recreation facilities and programs, services for local youth and seniors...among many others.

To learn more about Measure E, and position yourself to make an “informed decision” regarding how to vote on this Initiative, please visit the City’s website at <https://www.yucaipa.org/> and click on the link entitled: Measure E. Also, you will find a series of articles regarding Measure E in the present publication AND you can find additional information regarding Measure E on such social media platforms as Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, among others.

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Photo suggestion: Photo of Mayor Avila.