

**Jefferson County
Disaster and Emergency Services**

P.O. Box H

Boulder, Montana 59632

Office: 406-225-4035 Cell: 406-439-6083 Fax: 406-225-4145

des@jeffersoncounty-mt.gov

**JEFFERSON COUNTY VOTERS TO DECIDE
FUTURE OF EMERGENCY BROADCAST
SYSTEM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29th, 2016

Contact: Doug Dodge, Jefferson County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator: 406-225-4035.

The voters of Jefferson County will have the chance in November to decide on the future of the county's Emergency Broadcast System at the polls. The cost of operating the seven county owned low power FM radio stations has risen to about half of the budget of the county's office of Disaster and Emergency Services, and the County Commissioners have decided to ask the voters if this is a service they would like to continue. The low power FM radio stations that make up the Emergency Broadcast System are located in Boulder, Basin, Cardwell, Elk Park, Jefferson City, Montana City and Whitehall.

The system was built after the events of 9/11/2001, and has been used to broadcast updates regarding wildfires, flooding, and traffic problems, among other incidents. The stations have also been used by local fire departments, food share organizations, and school districts to broadcast events. When not in use for broadcasting emergency updates or events, the stations play music, which requires annual license fees from copyright holders as well as fees for a 'DJ' service to play the music itself. Another substantial portion of the costs to run the stations are the administration, day to day operations, and recordkeeping required of all radio stations. Additional costs include the maintenance requirements of the system. As budgets have grown

tighter, this line item has been reduced substantially which has created a backlog of work that the system needs for operations and to remain operational during emergencies (power outages, earthquakes, etc.).

The voters of Jefferson County are being asked if they would like to fund a two mill, two year levy which would generate approximately \$55,766 per year to fund the stations. This amount will fund the day to day operations of the stations, as well as provide funding for maintenance. The two mills also includes funds for the installation of backup generators at each broadcast location. The county already owns these generators, so this portion of the funds requested are limited to installation costs only. The tax impact of the election of two (2) mills on a residence with a phase-in value of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) would be \$1.35; One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) would be approximately \$2.70; on a residence with a phase-in value of Two Hundred Thousand (\$200,000) would be approximately \$5.40.

For questions or further information, please contact Jefferson County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Doug Dodge at 406-225-4035.