

**ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – ZOOM ONLY**

May 11, 2026
Monday, 4:30 pm

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Sandi Smith
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Chief Jones
3. ROLL CALL- Rebecca Gelsinger
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. EXECUTIVE SESSION
 - a. Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b) for the purpose of receiving legal advice from the District’s legal counsel regarding pursuit of a revenue election in November 2026 and discussion regarding a proposal related to same from The Bighorn Company.
6. PUBLIC COMMENT * Public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person.
7. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
 - a. Discussion/Action re: Potential 2026 Election
8. ADJOURNMENT

The Mission of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to provide the citizens of and visitors to the Estes Valley with superior fire prevention, fire protection and emergency services in a safe and efficient manner.”

“The Mission of the Board of Directors of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to establish policy, goals, strategies and financial leadership that are the foundation for the long-term sustainability of the District.”

ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Agenda Statement – May 11, 2026

Agenda Item #4

Agenda Title:

Discussion/action re: Agenda

Submitted by:

Sandra Smith, Board President

Background Information:

Attachments:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Board Action Needed

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) the Agenda for the May 11, 2026, Special Board Meeting.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Agenda Statement – May 11, 2026

Agenda Item #6

Agenda Title:

Discussion/action re: Executive Session

Submitted by:

Sandra Smith, Board President

Background Information:

Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b) for the purpose of receiving legal advice from the District’s legal counsel regarding pursuit of a revenue election in November 2026 and discussion regarding a proposal related to same from The Bighorn Company.

Attachments:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Board Action Needed

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) to enter into executive session.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Agenda Statement – May 11, 2026

Agenda Item #7a

Agenda Title:

Discussion/action re: Potential
November 2026 Election

Submitted by:

Warren Jones, Interim Chief

Background Information:

See attached staff report.

Attachments:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Board Action Needed

A motion to (approve, deny, or modify) actions and/or direction to staff regarding the pursuit of a November 2026, May 2027, or November 2027 revenue election.

Sandra Smith	Yes	No
Scott Dorman	Yes	No
Ryan Leahy	Yes	No
Jeff Robbins	Yes	No
Jon Smith	Yes	No

STAFF REPORT

To: Estes Valley Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Fr: Warren Jones, Interim Fire Chief

Re: Potential November 2026 revenue election

Date: May 11, 2026

Summary and staff recommendation

On April 27, 2026, the board directed staff to seek a consultant to advise the board on the feasibility of a November 2026 revenue election. We received responses from five consultants including one full proposal. Four responding consultants indicated they would not be submitting a proposal. One of these four (Public Alignment) specifically advised (highlighted) against a November 2026 election.

The full proposal from The Bighorn Company can provide the services we requested but not within the timelines we need to make a timely decision. Under this proposal we would not be able to decide on a November 2026 election until at least mid-June. This would leave less than four months to prepare for an election. This will be at the same time as we are deciding on a new fire chief. The Bighorn proposal also did not provide fire district references.

Request for quotes and responses

Attached is the Request for Quote sent out April 30, 2026. Also attached are the four email responses and the full proposal from The Bighorn Company.

Timeline for November 3, 2026, coordinated election

Attached is the timeline for November 3, 2026, coordinated election provided by our attorney. These are just the minimum legal steps and do not include all the internal and external steps required for a successful election. Note the first date of July 24 notifying the county clerk of our intention to participate in a coordinated election.

Survey information

Attached is a preliminary proposal for a public opinion survey. While we have not decided on a survey as part of our preparation for an election, this proposal provides good information on the kind of data a survey provides. As discussed on April 27, a survey would likely be an integral part of our overall strategy for a revenue election. Although we have not

sought formal proposals for a survey, it is unlikely that one could be implemented within a timeline for the fall 2026 election.

Recommendations

Based on the information above and attachments staff have the following three recommendations.

1. That the Board schedule a revenue election for November 2027. While the turnout may be lower than a November election in 2026, it will certainly be higher than a May 2027 election. A May 2027 election would be significantly more expensive than a coordinated election in November. Additionally, we do not believe there is time to fully develop the why and needs step discussed on April 27.
2. That the Board appoints a financial independence task force made up of internal and external stakeholders. This was a key component of the successful election forming the district in 2009. Our preliminary research also identified this as a successful strategy.
3. That we fully implement as much as fiscally and operationally possible the public information and external communications strategy discussed in March 2026 (attached).



ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

PREVENT PREPARE PERFORM

Request for Quote (RFQ)

Request for quotes to advise the Estes Valley Fire Protection District Board on the feasibility of conducting a 2026 sales tax initiative

Issued: April 30, 2026

Quotes must be submitted to: chief@estesvalleyfire.org by 8 am MST, May 5, 2026

Summary: The EVFPD is seeking professional guidance on the feasibility and advisability of conducting a Sales Tax Election in November 2026. This engagement is intended to be a short-term task focused on evaluating whether pursuing a 2026 election is practical, strategically sound, and aligned with district goals. The selected consultant will assess relevant factors, including timing, legal considerations, financial implications, and community readiness. As part of this analysis, the consultant will also outline the advantages and disadvantages of conducting an election in 2026 versus 2027, including potential impacts on voter turnout, campaign preparedness, economic conditions, and overall likelihood of success. Based on these findings, the consultant will provide a clear recommendation on whether the District should proceed with a 2026 sales tax election or consider an alternative timeline.

Services Requested: The EVFPD is seeking a consultant to conduct a short-term assessment of the feasibility and advisability of a November 2026 Sales Tax Election. The scope of services will include, at a minimum, the following:

- Conduct telephone or video interviews with key District staff, including the Fire Chief and other personnel.
- Review all relevant documents prepared to date related to a potential sales tax measure.
- Analyze available voter data to assess electoral feasibility and community support.
- Attend and provide input at one Board meeting during the week of May 11.

The consultant will summarize findings from these activities, outline the advantages and disadvantages of conducting a 2026 sales tax election, and provide a clear recommendation regarding whether the District should proceed. The consultant will also lead a discussion of these findings and recommendations at an EVFPD Board meeting.

Guidance Fee Structure & Payment Terms: Proposals shall include a not-to-exceed total fee for the scope of services described, along with a breakdown of costs by task (e.g., interviews, document review, voter data analysis, and Board meeting attendance). The District prefers a fixed-fee structure for this short-term engagement; however, respondents may also propose an hourly rate with an estimated total cost and defined scope assumptions.

Payment will be made upon completion of services and receipt of an invoice, unless an alternative milestone-based payment schedule is proposed and approved.

RFQ Selection Process Timeline: RFQ issued on April 30, 2026; deadline for questions is May 4, 2026, and quotes must be submitted by May 5, 2026, at 8 am MST. The project kickoff is on May 7, 2026. Any questions must be directed to Chief Warren Jones: (970) 397-3114, or chief@estesvalleyfire.org

RFQ Submission Requirements: Please provide at least three references with similar work with Fire Districts in the past 2 years. Quotes shall be submitted electronically to chief@estesvalleyfire.org

The District reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, or negotiate scope and fees with the selected consultant.

Disclaimer: This RFQ does not commit the EVFPD to select any firm, award any work order, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or procure or contract for any services or supplies. EVFPD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals received, cancel or modify the RFQ in part or in its entirety, or change the RFQ guidelines, when it is in the best interests of EVFPD to do so.

Serving the Residents and Visitors of the Estes Valley with Superior Fire and Safety Services

901 N. SAINT VRAIN AVE. ESTES PARK CO 80517 970-577-0900 FAX 970-577-0923

Re: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

From Bryan-David Blakely <bryandavid@publicalignment.com>

Date Thu 4/30/2026 1:10 PM

To Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>

Cc sara@publicalignment.com <sara@publicalignment.com>

Hi Rebecca,

Thank you so much for reaching out. We work with Magellan all the time and would love to help you out. However, at this time I can tell you that there is definitely not sufficient time for an effective effort in 2026.

Our approach is based on achieving short term success and building long term trust for our clients with their residents. We have been successful at the ballot over 90% of the time and though we understand the desire to consider this election cycle we would not advise or support this.

If you decide to pursue your original plan for considering 2027 we would definitely be interested in discussing this further with you.

Thank you again for your consideration.

On Thu, Apr 30, 2026 at 10:15 AM Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org> wrote:

Good morning Sara & Bryan,

Chief Warren Jones and I met with David Flaherty a few weeks back, and David suggested we contact you guys as we explore the Estes Valley Fire District becoming financially independent. We are in the early stages and were initially considering a 2027 election, but Chief Jones was asked by our Board to look into holding a 2026 election instead. I am reaching out to request a proposal/quote for conducting a feasibility study related to a potential 2026 sales tax election.

Attached is an RFQ. While it's a tight turnaround time, we would be interested in hearing from you if this is something you're interested in.

Please feel free to reach out to Chief Jones (contact info is included in the RFQ) if you have any questions.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Rebecca Gelsinger
Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief
Estes Valley Fire Protection District

RE: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

From Sean Walsh <sean@seanwalshconsulting.com>
Date Thu 4/30/2026 1:48 PM
To Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>

Hello Rebecca –

Thank you for considering my firm for this work for EVFPD.

Unfortunately, I'm at capacity and will have to pass. If things change the board pivots to 2027, please let me know.

Best of luck either way!

Sean

From: Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2026 9:12 AM
To: Sean Walsh <sean@seanwalshconsulting.com>
Subject: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

Good morning Sean,

Chief Warren Jones gave me your contact information and mentioned that the two of you had discussed the Fire District potentially holding an election to seek a sales tax to become independently funded. At a recent Board meeting, Chief Jones was asked by our Board to look into holding a 2026 election rather than a 2027 election. I am reaching out to request a proposal/quote for conducting a feasibility study related to a potential 2026 sales tax election.

Attached is an RFQ. While it's a tight turnaround time, we would be interested in hearing from you if this is something you're interested in.

Please feel free to reach out to Chief Jones (contact info is included in the RFQ) if you have any questions.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Rebecca Gelsinger
Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief
Estes Valley Fire Protection District

901 N. Saint Vrain Ave.
Estes Park, CO. 80517
Main: (970) 577 - 0900
Direct: (970) 577 - 3681

RE: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

From Lynea Hansen <lynea@lyneahansen.com>
Date Wed 5/6/2026 9:11 AM
To Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>

Rebecca,
I just found this in my spam folder. If you got other responses no worries but if you didn't and still need something from me let me know. Apologies for not seeing it before the deadline.

L

Lynea Hansen
Hansen Communications
(303) 579-8794
lynea@lyneahansen.com

From: Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2026 10:09 AM
To: Lynea Hansen <lynea@lyneahansen.com>
Subject: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

Good morning Lynea,

Chief Warren Jones gave me your contact information, and we discussed the Fire District potentially holding an election to seek a sales tax to become independently funded last week. At a recent Board meeting, Chief Jones was asked by our Board to look into holding a 2026 election rather than a 2027 election. I am reaching out to request a proposal/quote for conducting a feasibility study related to a potential 2026 sales tax election.

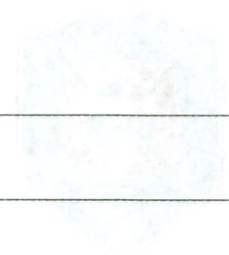
Attached is an RFQ. While it's a tight turnaround time, we would be interested in hearing from you if this is something you're interested in.

Please feel free to reach out to Chief Jones (contact info is included in the RFQ) if you have any questions.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Rebecca Gelsinger
Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief
Estes Valley Fire Protection District

901 N. Saint Vrain Ave.
Estes Park, CO. 80517
Main: (970) 577 - 0900
Direct: (970) 577 - 3681



Re: Request for Quote (RFQ) - Feasibility Study

From Curtis Hubbard <curtis@onsightpublicaffairs.com>

Date Wed 5/6/2026 10:40 AM

To Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org>

Cc INFO@ONSIGHTPA.COM <INFO@onsightpa.com>

Hi Rebecca,

Sorry for the slow response.

Our campaign dance card is full for this year, but thanks for reaching out!

On Thu, Apr 30, 2026 at 4:01 PM Rebecca Gelsinger <rgelsinger@estesvalleyfire.org> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I found your website and wanted to reach out to you and share our request for a quote. We are the Estes Valley Fire Protection District, and we are considering holding an election to seek a sales tax to become independently funded. At a recent Board meeting, our Chief was asked to look into holding a 2026 election rather than a 2027 election. I am reaching out to request a proposal/quote for conducting a feasibility study related to a potential 2026 sales tax election.

Attached is an RFQ. While it's a tight turnaround time, we would be interested in hearing from you if this is something you're interested in.

Please feel free to reach out to Chief Jones (contact info is included in the RFQ) if you have any questions.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Rebecca Gelsinger
Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief
Estes Valley Fire Protection District

901 N. Saint Vrain Ave.
Estes Park, CO. 80517
Main: (970) 577 - 0900
Direct: (970) 577 - 3681



The Bighorn Company
 7830 West Alameda Avenue 103-218
 Lakewood, Colorado 80226
 (720) 648-2360
thebighorncompany.com

Estes Valley Fire Protection District

Sales Tax Election Feasibility Assessment Proposal

Submitted In Response to RFQ Issued April 30, 2026 | Submitted May 4, 2026

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Firm Overview

The Bighorn Company is a Colorado-based political and communications consulting firm formed by Ian Silverii and Mansur Gidfar in 2021. We specialize in ballot measure campaigns, revenue measure feasibility assessments, strategic communications, and stakeholder engagement for government, nonprofit, and political clients across Colorado and nationally.

We maintain a small, curated client roster so that our principals work directly on every engagement. If selected, Principal Mansur Gidfar will personally lead all work on this project with additional support from Principal Ian Silverii and Managing Director Katie Farnan.

Our most directly relevant experience includes conducting a comprehensive ballot measure feasibility assessment for Jefferson County, Colorado, where our work – led by Gidfar – resulted in a successful revenue measure that passed with a 15-point margin of victory in November 2024. We also recently advised Summit County, Colorado on strategic communications and revenue measure planning for a referred mill levy renewal at the November 2026 ballot. Our principals have played instrumental roles in more than ten statewide and local ballot campaigns in Colorado, including revenue-raising measures that have collectively generated more than a billion dollars for governmental entities in the state.

Our past and current government and ballot measure clients include Jefferson County, Summit County, the Yes on Proposition FF campaign (Healthy School Meals for All, 2022), the No on Initiated Ordinance 309 campaign (Denver, 2024), and several other statewide and local ballot measure efforts. Please refer to the “relevant experience” section for a complete list of our ballot measure work and case studies and references from our most relevant past Clients.

Understanding of the Engagement

The Estes Valley Fire Protection District (EVFPD) is evaluating whether to pursue a sales tax measure on the November 2026 ballot. This is a consequential decision with significant implications for the District’s long-term fiscal health, operational capacity, and relationship with the community it serves. The District is seeking an outside consultant to provide an honest, informed assessment of whether a 2026 election is practical, strategically sound, and aligned with District goals.

Based on our review of the RFQ, we understand this to be a short-term, focused engagement. EVFPD needs a clear-eyed evaluation of the relevant factors that should inform the Board’s decision on whether and when to proceed, including timing, legal considerations, financial implications, community readiness, and the relative advantages and disadvantages of a 2026 versus 2027 election. The consultant’s role is to gather information, analyze it, and present the Board with a well-supported recommendation.

We are well-suited for this work. We have conducted this exact type of assessment for other Colorado local government entities, we understand the TABOR and election law landscape that governs referred revenue measures in Colorado, and we have a strong track record of giving clients honest recommendations grounded in data and political reality.

Relevant Experience

Case Studies & References

Jefferson County Funding Ballot Measure Assessment

Project type: Colorado local government ballot measure assessment

Bighorn Company role: General Consultants

Result: Success (recommendation accepted, referred to voters, and passed)

Reference: Lesley Dahlkemper | Chair, Jefferson County Board of Commissioners |
(303) 638-3433 | ldahlkem@co.jefferson.co.us

Role and Responsibilities: The Bighorn company was retained by Jefferson County, Colorado for a ballot measure assessment project with two primary objectives:

1. Conduct a thorough fact-finding process to evaluate potential solutions to Jefferson County's revenue and budget challenges, including whether or not submitting a funding question or questions to voters at the November 2024 ballot is the best strategic path to meeting the needs and expectations of the community.
2. Use the results of this fact-finding process to provide a final recommendation to County leadership regarding whether or not to submit a funding question or questions to Jefferson County voters. We ultimately recommended specific ballot language as the result of an extensive community outreach and public opinion research project. In July 2024, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted to refer our recommended ballot language to voters at the November 2024 ballot.

Our work on this project included:

- Developing and executing a comprehensive project plan including high-level strategic guidance, community outreach, and public opinion research
- Working on a strict timeline informed by ballot language referral and certification deadlines
- Ongoing, direct coordination with County Staff and stakeholders
- Regular communication with the Board of County Commissioners
- Comparable Ballot Measure Analysis of election results and ballot language of 96 total revenue raising measures presented to voters in both Jefferson County & comparable CO counties since 2012
- Analysis of County financial needs and potential revenue solutions in collaboration with the Jefferson County Office of Strategy, Planning & Analysis (SPA) & the County staff project team

- Managing a community and stakeholder outreach process that included (1) surveys and Interviews with leadership and staff of County offices and departments and (2) surveys and Interviews with community leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds including members of County boards and commissions, elected officials representing municipalities throughout the County, and individuals and organizations who are actively involved in County civic life and/or serve County residents.
- Identifying, retaining, and managing an experienced public opinion research firm (Aspect Strategic) to conduct three phases of public opinion surveys, which included:
 - A Qualitative forum discussion with 31 County residents from a diverse range of backgrounds in March 2024
 - Two Quantitative public opinion surveys of 1800 randomly selected County residents conducted in March and April 2024
- Optimising recommended ballot language based on community and stakeholder feedback, public opinion research, and consultation with qualified legal counsel
- Providing a final recommendation to County leaders to refer a funding measure to the November 2024 ballot, including recommended ballot language

Outcomes achieved: The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted to refer our recommended ballot language to voters at the November 2024 ballot (Jefferson County Ballot Issue 1A, 2024), where it passed with a **15 point margin of victory and allowed the county to retain an additional ~\$60 million per year** – making it the most successful County-level revenue-raising measure in Jeffco in more than a decade.

Yes on Proposition FF (Free School Meals for All Colorado Students)

Project type: Statewide ballot initiative campaign (Colorado, 2022)

Bighorn Company role: General Consultants

Result: Success (supported initiative passed)

Reference: Ashley Wheeland | Campaign Lead and Policy Director, Healthy School Meals for All / Hunger Free Colorado | (720) 258-5115 | amwheeland@gmail.com

Role and responsibilities: As General Consultants, the Bighorn Company played an integral role in the planning and execution of the Yes on Prop FF campaign, including:

- Successfully identifying and recruiting an experienced and highly qualified Campaign Manager
- Assisting with the development and execution of the campaign's fundraising plan in coordination with the primary sponsoring organization (Hunger Free Colorado) and a broad coalition of supportive organizations
- Providing prospective campaign vendor research & recommendations, budgeting, and scenario planning
- Hiring and managing campaign vendors in collaboration with the Campaign Manager including public opinion research, paid media, and earned media vendors
- Providing regular input on topline campaign messaging and ongoing rapid response press support
- Collaborating with campaign vendors on the development of winning campaign communications such as mailers, radio, digital, and television ads
- Assisting with campaign spokesperson selection, recruitment, and development

Outcomes achieved: Proposition FF was approved by Colorado voters at the 2022 ballot. Prop FF raised an estimated **\$100.7 million per year** in additional state revenues to establish the Healthy School Meals for All program to reimburse participating schools to provide free meals to students and provide schools with local food purchasing grants and school food-related funding.

Prop FF **passed with a 13.5 point margin of victory (56.75% Yes - 43.25% No), making it the most successful revenue raising ballot measure campaign with Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) mandated ballot language (beginning with "Shall state taxes be increased...") in Colorado history.** Jefferson County voters approved Prop FF with a 13.22 point margin of victory (56.61% Yes - 43.39% No).

Yes on Proposition 118 (Establish Colorado Paid Family Leave Program)

Project type: Statewide ballot initiative (Colorado, 2020)

Bighorn Company role: Political Director (Ian Silverii, Principal)

Result: Success (supported initiative passed)

Reference: Joe Kabourek | Campaign Manager, Yes on Proposition 118 | (321) 439-6846 | JKabourek@gmail.com

Roles and Responsibilities: As then-Executive Director of ProgressNow Colorado serving in the role of campaign Political Director, now-Bighorn Company Principal Ian Silverii played an integral role in the planning and execution of the Yes on Prop 118 campaign, including:

- Advised Campaign Manager Joe Kabourek and other senior staff on political strategy throughout the campaign
- Grasstops education, recruitment, and sign-ons for elected officials at all levels of government.
- Securing the endorsements of over 90 current and former elected officials including then-Gov. John Hickenlooper, US Senator Michael Bennet, all four Democratic members of the Congressional delegation and every statewide nonexecutive constitutional office holder.
- Helped secure over 60 endorsements of leading nonprofit organizations in Colorado as well as 150 small businesses across the state

Outcomes achieved: Proposition 118 was approved by Colorado voters at the 2020 ballot. Prop 118 raised an estimated **\$1.2 billion in additional state revenues** in state budget year 2023-24 to establish a paid family and medical leave program in Colorado funded by a payroll tax to be paid for by employers and employees in a 50/50 split.

Prop 118 passed with a 15.5 point margin of victory (57.75% Yes - 42.25% No), and, as a fee-based insurance program and not a strict tax increase, avoided TABOR-mandated ballot language due to its funding design.

With the passage of Prop 118, Colorado became the first state to pass paid family and medical leave at the ballot box. Benefits officially became available to Colorado families on January 1, 2024.

Summit County Revenue Measure Assessment (2025–2026)

Project type: Colorado local government ballot measure assessment

Bighorn Company role: General Consultants

Result: Comparable ballot measure analysis and recommended ballot language completed and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. Referral anticipated for 2026 general election ballot.

Reference: Nina Waters | Commissioner, District 3, Summit County | (352) 359-6655 | nina.waters@summitcountyco.gov

Role and Responsibilities:The Bighorn Company was retained by Summit County, Colorado to conduct a comparable ballot measure analysis to inform ballot language recommendations for the County's planned referral of a measure to extend its existing Strong Future property tax. The Strong Future tax funds a broad portfolio of community priorities including wildfire prevention, mental health and substance abuse services, suicide prevention, affordable early childhood care, recycling and waste diversion, and repairs and improvements to public buildings and community facilities. We conducted a review of 81 revenue-raising measures presented to voters in Summit County and comparable Colorado counties with election results and ballot language data gathered directly from county clerks, and presented a ballot language recommendation grounded in the findings of our analysis.

Yes on Ballot Issue 6C — Boulder Public Library District (2022)

Project type: Local ballot issue (City of Boulder and surrounding unincorporated Boulder County areas)

Bighorn Company role: Digital & Outreach Lead (Katie Farnan, Managing Director)

Result: Success (supported initiative passed)

Reference: Doug Hamilton | Campaign Co-Chair, Yes on 6C | (720) 550-3572 | hamilton7579@gmail.com

Role and Responsibilities: As a core member of the Communications Committee, Bighorn Company Managing Director Katie Farnan directed all digital and outreach efforts for the campaign, including developing and executing the campaign's social media plan across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok; leading organic engagement in Facebook groups and NextDoor to combat misinformation and connect with specific voter segments; developing an all-volunteer in-person outreach strategy at grocery stores, farmers markets, and community events; and serving as chief writer and editor for 39 unique blog posts and 57 letters and opinion pieces, 38 of which were published in local outlets including the Daily Camera, Boulder Weekly, and Boulder Beat. The campaign also produced 72 original short video testimonials distributed across digital platforms and two video ads.

Outcomes Achieved: Ballot Issue 6C established the Boulder Public Library District and was projected to raise an estimated **\$18.78 million in additional annual revenues** through a 3.5 mill property tax levy. The Yes on Issue 6C campaign was led by Boulder Library Champions, a volunteer-driven organization.

Additional Ballot Measure Experience

Year	Initiative	Role	Result
2024	No on Initiated Ordinance 309 (Denver slaughterhouse ban)	Communications & Earned Media Lead	Success (Opposed measure defeated)
2020	No on Prop 115 (ban on abortions later in pregnancy)	Coalition Lead & Communications Committee Chair	Success (Opposed measure defeated)
2018	Yes on Amendment A (repeal exception to slavery ban)	General Consultant & Campaign Strategist	Success (Supported measure passed)
2018	Yes on Proposition 111 (payday loan limits)	Digital, Communications & Social Media Strategist	Success (Supported measure passed)
2018	No on Amendment 74 (compensation for takings)	Strategist & Executive Committee Member	Success (Opposed measure defeated)
2016	Yes on Proposition 106 (death with dignity)	Communications & Political Director	Success (Supported measure passed)
2016	Yes on Amendment 70 (increase minimum wage)	Coalition Communications, Digital & Social Media Lead	Success (Supported measure passed)

Continued on Following Page

Proposed Scope of Services

We propose the following scope of services, organized by task, to fulfill the requirements outlined in the EVFPD's RFQ.

Task 1: Staff Interviews

- Conduct telephone or video interviews with the Fire Chief, key District staff, and any other personnel identified by the District as relevant to the assessment.
- Focus interviews on understanding the District's current financial situation, the specific needs a sales tax measure would address, any prior community engagement or polling that has been conducted, and any known community dynamics that could affect a ballot measure's prospects.

Task 2: Document Review

- Review all relevant documents prepared to date related to a potential sales tax measure, including any financial analyses, prior polling or survey data, Board meeting minutes, community feedback, draft ballot language, and legal memoranda.

Task 3: Voter Data and Electoral Feasibility Analysis

- Analyze available voter data to assess the electoral landscape within the EVFPD's boundaries, including voter registration trends, historical turnout patterns, and results of comparable revenue measures in the region and in similar Colorado special districts.
- Assess community readiness for a sales tax measure based on available data and information gathered through staff interviews and document review.

Task 4: Board Meeting Attendance (Week of May 11)

- Attend and participate in one EVFPD Board meeting during the week of May 11, 2026. Given the compressed timeline between the May 7 project kickoff and this meeting, we propose that this initial Board meeting serve as an information-gathering and discussion session rather than a presentation of final findings.
- Use the Board meeting to hear directly from Board members about their priorities, concerns, and questions regarding a potential sales tax measure, and to gather additional context that will inform the assessment.

Task 5: Findings Memo and Recommendation

- Prepare a written findings memo that summarizes the results of all interviews, document review, and voter data analysis conducted under this engagement.
- Outline the advantages and disadvantages of conducting a sales tax election in 2026 versus 2027, including potential impacts on voter turnout, campaign preparedness, economic conditions, and overall likelihood of success.
- Provide a clear, written recommendation on whether the District should proceed with a 2026 sales tax election or consider an alternative timeline.

Task 6: Board Presentation of Findings

- Present findings and recommendation to the EVFPD Board of Directors at a subsequent Board meeting to be scheduled upon completion of the analysis.
- Lead a discussion of findings and recommendations with Board members and respond to questions.

Proposed Timeline & Fee Proposal

The following timeline accounts for the project kickoff date of May 7, 2026 and the Board meeting scheduled for the week of May 11, as specified in the RFQ.

We want to be transparent that the lead consultant for this project, Principal Mansur Gidfar, has pre-existing client commitments during the following periods: **May 13–15** and **May 25–29**. These windows have been accounted for in the proposed schedule below.

We also want to be candid about timing: we do not believe it is possible to conduct a thorough and responsible feasibility assessment in the four to five days between the May 7 kickoff and the week of May 11 Board meeting. We can and will begin staff interviews and document review immediately upon kickoff, but we recommend that the initial Board meeting serve as an information-gathering session.

If selected for this project, we will complete our full analysis and deliver a written recommendation and Board presentation after that meeting, on the timeline outlined below. Our proposed timeline will provide EVFPD with a concrete recommendation by the week of June 8, which will allow ample time for subsequent preparations to refer a sales tax measure by the September 7 deadline if we ultimately recommend a 2026 measure and the board accepts our recommendation.

We also note that if the Board meeting during the week of May 11 falls on May 13, 14, or 15, we will need to arrange an alternative date due to the scheduling conflict noted above. We are available on May 11 and 12.

Phase / Dates	Activities
May 7–12	Project kickoff; begin staff interviews and document review; attend Board meeting (information gathering and discussion)
May 16–June 5	Complete staff interviews and document review; conduct voter data and electoral feasibility analysis; draft findings memo and recommendation
Week of June 8 <i>(or as scheduled by EVFPD)</i>	Deliver written findings memo; present recommendation to Board; lead Board discussion

We propose a fixed, not-to-exceed total fee of **\$10,000** for the scope of services described in this document. A breakdown of estimated costs by task is provided below. Payment will be due upon completion of all services and receipt of a final invoice, consistent with the payment terms outlined in the RFQ. Travel expenses for Board meeting attendance in Estes Park are included in the not-to-exceed fee and will not be billed separately.

NOVEMBER 3, 2026 COORDINATED ELECTION CALENDAR

DATE	ACTION
7-24-26	You must notify the County Clerk and Recorder if you intend to participate in a coordinated election (100 days before the election). §1-7-116(5), C.R.S.
8-25-26	Last day to enter into an agreement with the County Clerk and Recorder concerning the mailing of the Notice required by Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution (“TABOR”) and the conduct of the coordinated election on behalf of the special district (no later than 70 days prior to the election). §1-7-116(2), C.R.S.
August/September (prior to ballot certification)	Board adopts Election Resolution calling the special election, appointing Designated Election Official, approving the ballot issue(s) to be submitted to the electors, ratifying the signing of the IGA with the Clerk and Recorder, and determining other matters.
9-4-26	<p>Deadline to certify ballot content to the County Clerk and Recorder of each county that has territory within the special district (no later than 60 days before the election).</p> <p>The ballot issue(s) or question(s) shall be placed on the ballot in the following order: measures to increase taxes; measures to increase debt; then other referred measures, including measures to retain revenues in excess of the special district’s fiscal year spending limit and term limit waiver. §§1-5-203(3)(a) and 1-5-407(5.5), C.R.S.</p>
	FCPA NOTE: Issue Committees shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 calendar days of accepting or making contributions or expenditures in excess of \$200 to support or oppose any ballot issue or ballot question. Article XXVIII, Section 2(10), Colo. Constitution, and §1-45-108(3.3), C.R.S.
9-18-26	<p>Written comments for and against the TABOR ballot issue(s) must be received by the Designated Election Official (45 days before the election). (Comments must be filed by NOON on the Friday before the 45th day before the election). Article X, Section 20, Colorado Constitution, and §1-7-901(4), C.R.S.</p> <p>County Clerk shall mail ballots to those eligible electors who reside</p>

	within the special district and who have applied and are designated as a “covered voter” under the Uniform and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) (not later than 45 days before the election). §§1-8.3-103(1)(d) and 1-8.3-110(1), C.R.S.
9-21-26	Designated Election Official shall deliver the special district’s TABOR notice to the County Clerk and Recorder (no later than 43 days before the election). §1-7-904, C.R.S.
10-2-26	Mail TABOR Notice to each household where an active registered elector of the special district resides (at least 30 days before the election). Article X, Section 20(3)(b), Colorado Constitution
10-9-26	Ballot packets can be mailed to each eligible elector, including property owners who are active registered voters, but may not reside within the special district. Mail ballots shall be made available at the County Clerk and Recorder’s office, or the office designated in the mail ballot plan filed with the Secretary of State, for eligible electors who are not listed on the voter registration or property owners’ lists, but who are authorized to vote (not sooner than 22 days prior to election). §1-7.5-107(3)(a)(I), C.R.S.
10-13-26	FCPA NOTE: File Issue Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures with the Secretary of State (21 st day before the election). §1-45-108(2)(a)(II), C.R.S.
10-14-26	<p>Publish Notice of the election once (no later than 20 days before the election). Post Notice in the office of the Designated Election Official (no later than 20 days before the election and until two (2) days following the election. Mail a copy of the Notice to the County Clerk and Recorder of each county in which the special district is located. §§1-5-205(1.3), and 1-5-205(2), C.R.S. . Refer to the Coordinated Election Agreement with the County Clerk and Recorder regarding Notice of Election and confirm same with the County.</p> <p>DEBT OR OTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATION election. Post notice of additional financial information on District's website, or if no website, in the chief administrative office of the District (no later than 20 days before the election). §1-7-908(1)(a), C.R.S.</p>
10-16-26	Last day for County Clerk to mail the ballot packages (no later than 18 days prior to the election). §1-7.5-107(3)(a)(I), C.R.S.

10-30-26	FCPA NOTE: File Issues Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act with the Secretary of State (Friday before the election). §1-45-108(2)(a)(II), C.R.S.
11-3-26	ELECTION DAY. 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
	SALES TAX. For sales tax increase elections, notice of the adoption of a sales tax shall be submitted to the Executive Director of the Department of Revenue (at least 100 days prior to the effective date of such sales tax. An effective date is either January 1 st or July 1 st following the date of the election.) If such sales tax election is held less than 105 days prior to the January 1 st or July 1 st following the date of the election, such sales tax proposal shall not be effective until the next succeeding January 1 st or July 1 st . Colorado Secretary of State Guidelines
11-25-26	Canvass Board shall certify the official abstract of votes cast at the election (no later than the 22 days after the election). §§1-10-102(1) and 1-10-203(1), C.R.S.
12-3-26	Certify the election results to the Division of Local Government (within 30 days after the election). §§1-11-103(3) and 32-1-104(1), C.R.S.
12-8-26	FCPA NOTE: File Issue Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures with the Secretary of State (35 days after the election). §1-45-108(2)(a)(II), C.R.S.
12-18-26	For debt authorization elections, mail the election results by certified mail to the Board of County Commissioners of each county in which the special district is located or to the governing body of a municipality that has adopted a resolution of approval of the special district and to the Division of Securities (within 45 days after the election). §32-1-1101.5(1), C.R.S.
12-3-28	Election official shall retain election materials until time has expired for any contest proceedings or 25 months after the election, whichever is later. §1-7-802, C.R.S.



Proposal of Public Opinion Research Services to the Estes Valley Fire Protection District

February 23rd, 2026



**Magellan
Strategies**

Your Trusted Survey Research Partner

Prepared for Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones
Prepared by David Flaherty, CEO

Magellan Strategies
4800 Aspen Creek Drive | Broomfield, CO 80023
MagellanStrategies.com | 303-861-8585

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About Magellan Strategies

Magellan Strategies is a professional public opinion research firm that measures and understands resident and voter opinion. Since 2007, we have managed ballot measure research projects for countless Colorado fire districts, fire departments, local governments, school districts, and special districts (metro, library, fire, and recreation). Our team collaborates closely with fire service professionals, staff, and board members. We are proud friends of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association and regularly attend the annual **Fire Leadership Challenge Conference**. You can learn more about our work with fire districts and departments by clicking **[HERE](#)**.



We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal to Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones and the Estes Valley Fire Protection District leadership team.

Estes Valley Fire Protection District Survey Needs

The Estes Valley Fire Protection District needs an experienced public opinion research firm to manage a statistically accurate, demographically representative survey of the district's voters and residents. The survey will include questions gauging opinions on the following issues, including:

- Measure the fire district's job approval, image rating, and service satisfaction levels.
- Measure concerns of current and future wildland fire risk and residential fire incidents.
- Measure opinions of the district being fiscally responsible & spending taxpayer money wisely.
- Measure voter support and opposition for a potential sales tax ballot measure.
- Educate and inform residents and voters about why the fire district is considering the ballot measure, given the end of the IGA agreement with the Town of Estes Park.
- Measure changes in voter support and opposition after being informed of the reasons why a ballot measure is being considered.

Additionally, the survey will include open-ended verbatim questions, giving respondents multiple chances to share their honest thoughts and opinions.

The Magellan Strategies Ballot Measure Survey Difference

When selecting an opinion research firm to conduct a professional ballot measure survey of residents and voters, fire district staff and board members should understand the various survey data collection methods and databases used to complete the project. Magellan Strategies uses modern data collection techniques, including MMS text messages, phone interviews as needed, and enhanced voter registration databases.

Our random survey data collection methods consistently generate more engaging surveys and interviews than traditional “phone only” or “online panel” surveys, which rely on outdated voter databases and non-representative, incentivized panels. In short, our survey data collection methods and resident engagement process will interview a wider demographic, including hard-to-reach populations, compared to other opinion research firms that depend solely on phone-only and online panels.



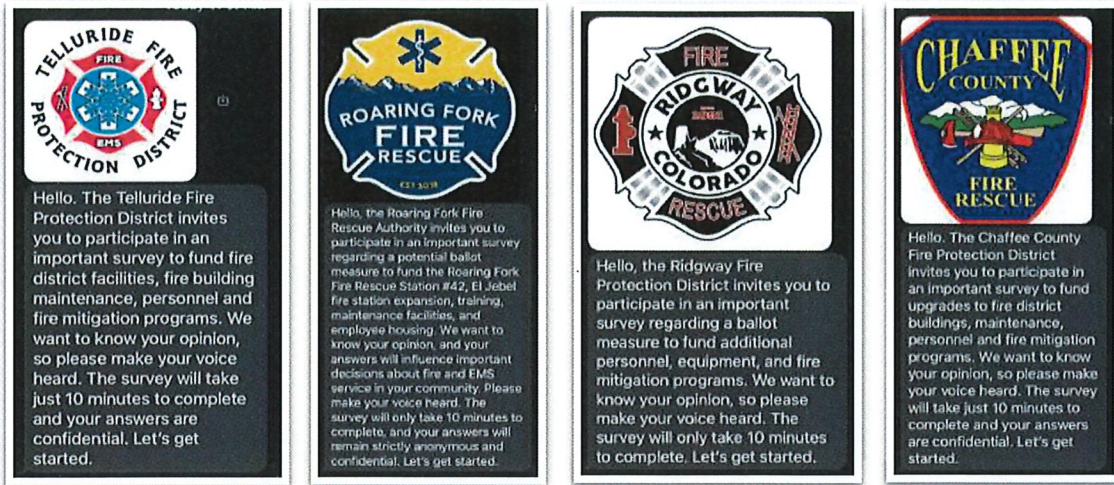
Additionally, our high-quality surveys, which use larger sample sizes, offer greater value to our fire district clients at a cost similar to or lower than our competitors'. Also, our survey platform provides residents with an inclusive, informative, and enjoyable survey experience. Just ask one of our fantastic fire district clients.

The Magellan Strategies Survey Data Collection Process

One important aspect of a statistically valid and representative survey is giving respondents multiple opportunities to participate. We do this by using several data collection methods. The first method involves sending multiple MMS text invitations (texts with an image and a message) to a randomly selected sample of community residents and voters. These MMS survey invitations are reliable and professional, reaching more residents than any previous Estes Valley Fire Protection District community survey.

The second method for collecting survey data involves interviewing respondents by phone through a professional call center staffed with live agents. Unfortunately, this approach is costly and significantly raises the overall survey expenses. However, our MMS text survey invitation often yields enough responses, making phone interviews unnecessary. Usually, we postpone hiring a call center to assess the effectiveness of the MMS text data collection.

The third survey data collection method is designed primarily for smaller fire districts with voter populations of 5,000 or fewer. This method uses a district's email database. We provide staff with a survey link that can be sent in a dedicated email to residents and voters who have opted to receive news and updates. Additionally, some fire districts promote the survey on social media to increase awareness and boost participation. We can also provide survey QR codes for posting and distribution in public buildings and areas, if requested.



The fourth data collection method involves mailing postcards to a random sample of households. We will only use this method if the MMS text survey invitations prove less effective than anticipated. By following our public engagement best practices, these four methods will reach a higher response rate than relying exclusively on “phone only” or “online panel” methods.

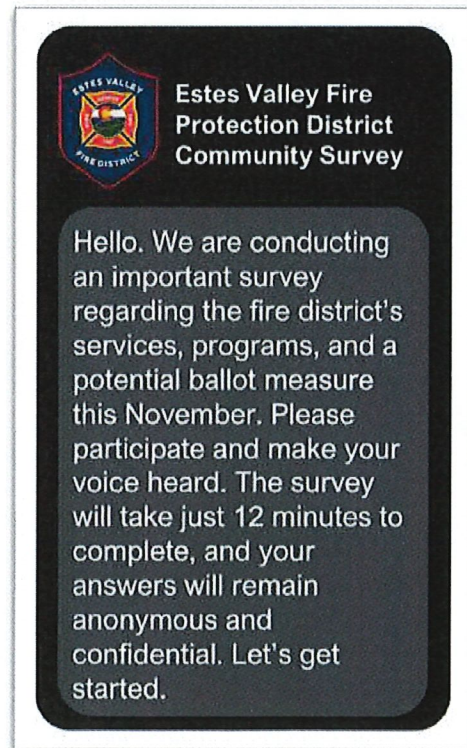
The Overwhelming Benefits of MMS Text Survey Data Collection

Once again, a statistically valid and representative survey should provide respondents with multiple opportunities to participate. MMS text survey data collection effectively meets this standard, and we have used it in all our opinion research projects since 2020. The process involves sending an MMS text survey invitation to the respondent’s cell phone number. Additional benefits of MMS text survey data collection include:

Send Multiple Survey Invitations. Unlike phone or online panel surveys, MMS text invitations are fast and cost-effective, allowing multiple messages to be sent to residents in different languages. Additionally, invitations can be targeted to specific population groups based on region, gender, age, or U.S. Census socioeconomic data.

Excellent Response Engagement: People from diverse demographics, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to participate in a community survey when the invitation includes the local fire district’s logo. We have been testing this approach since 2020, and it has consistently yielded higher response rates than “phone-only” survey data collection.

Larger Sample Sizes: This is due to strong survey participation. Bigger samples lead to lower margins of error, higher confidence levels, and a more accurate, representative survey.

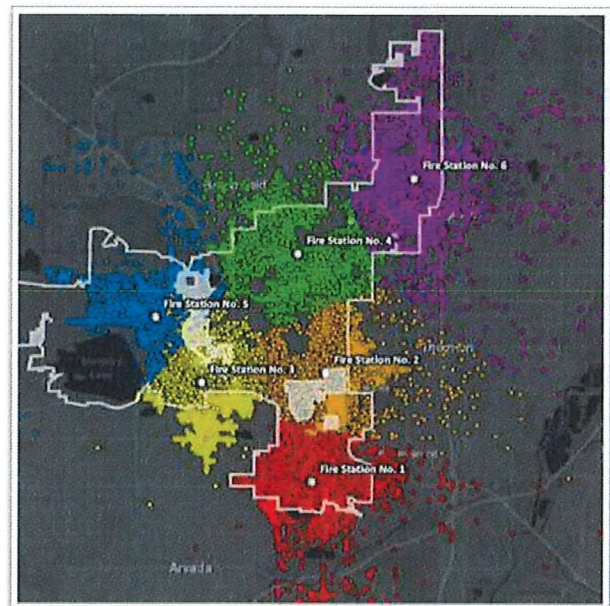


An Online Survey Can Include More Questions Than a Phone Survey: It takes respondents less time to read and answer questions on their cellphones, desktops, or other devices than to respond to an interviewer who reads questions and records responses. Therefore, online surveys can have more questions without increasing respondent fatigue.

A Trustworthy Communication: An MMS text survey invitation from the local fire district is a professional, trustworthy message that respondents understand and appreciate. Additionally, it enhances the fire district’s reputation and image among the communities it serves.

Using Images to Improve the Respondent Experience: Another advantage of MMS text survey data collection is the ability to incorporate images. Images can enhance the respondent experience and help fire districts and departments communicate information that might be difficult to convey otherwise. The following images educated and informed voters in the City of Westminster about a property tax comparison to other communities and a map of fire district calls.

City	City Levy	Fire Protection District Levy	City and Fire Levy
Northglenn	11.597	16.138	27.735
Denver	26.946	-	26.946
Broomfield (City)	11.457	14.738	26.195
Fort Collins	9.797	10.824	20.621
Littleton	10.426	9.288	19.714
Arvada	4.310	14.893	19.203
Loveland	9.564	8.837	18.401
Lakewood	4.711	13.431	18.142
Longmont	13.420	-	13.420
Boulder	11.648	-	11.648
Greeley	11.274	-	11.274
Thornton	10.210	-	10.210
Aurora	7.816	-	7.816
Westminster	3.650	-	3.650



Example Magellan Fire District Ballot Measure Surveys

The following are three examples of how we manage a fire district/department ballot measure survey. Each survey example summarizes the survey findings, includes a link to view the survey presentation, a link to take the survey, and a QR code to take the survey on a mobile device. This information will provide a complete understanding of our approach to ballot measure surveys and to measuring resident and voter opinions. You should also be aware that the fire safety Westminster ballot measure was co-mingled with local street funding. The street funding option helped build overall support to achieve voter approval.

South Metro Fire Rescue District 2025 Ballot Measure Survey

Voters in the South Metro Fire Rescue District expressed strong confidence in the fire district’s performance and overall service quality. Large majorities said they were familiar with the district, overwhelmingly approved of its performance, and believed that fire and medical service needs had

increased in recent years. However, fewer voters believed the district had enough financial resources to ensure adequate fire safety and emergency services. Residents also reported that fire risks and the need for emergency medical services have increased, underscoring that demand for services exceeds available funding.

Initial support for a potential ballot measure was strong, with voters favoring both a 0.5% sales tax increase and a 3-mill property tax increase. However, support was higher for the sales tax option. When asked to choose between the two, nearly half favored the sales tax measure. Support increased further after voters learned about the district's revenue losses from changes in state legislation, rising call volumes, higher equipment costs, and the need to maintain staffing, facilities, and emergency response capabilities.

Voters also respond positively to information about the district's long history of fiscal responsibility and the potential consequences of budget cuts, including smaller crews, closed stations, slower response times, and reduced wildfire and emergency preparedness. Opponents cited tax fatigue, concerns about government spending, and perceptions of inefficiency. Many preferred a sales tax over a property tax, highlighting fairness, control over personal costs, and widespread burden-sharing, while those favoring a property tax cited the regressive nature of sales taxes and the stability of property-based revenue. To view the survey presentation, click [HERE](#). Scan the QR code or click the link below to take the survey.

[**CLICK HERE**](#)



City of Westminster Fire Department 2025 Ballot Measure Survey

Westminster voters gave the city generally positive marks for overall performance, fiscal responsibility, and the quality of fire and emergency medical services. Seventy percent approve of how the city manages services, and confidence in the Westminster Fire Department is even stronger: 77% approved of its performance and 59% agreed it spends taxpayer money wisely. Views of street conditions and maintenance, however, are more mixed. While about half rate neighborhood and main streets as excellent or good, a large share rate them only fair or poor, and 39% disapprove of Public Works' performance. Street conditions, homelessness and public safety, water costs, crime, and concerns about rapid development are among the top issues residents believe the city should address.

Initial support for the proposed 0.35% sales and use tax increase to fund fire services and street improvements was strong, with 61% saying they would vote yes before receiving any additional information. After learning about increases in call volume, response-time gaps, wildfire mitigation needs, the city's budget restructuring efforts, and the deteriorating condition of neighborhood streets, support rose to 66%. Each piece of information—regarding emergency response standards, fire station needs, fiscal stewardship, and street maintenance challenges—further boosted the

likelihood of voter support. Key motivators include trust in the fire department, concerns about timely emergency responses, and a desire for better roads and greater community investment.

Open-ended responses revealed clear themes. Supporters highlight public safety, aging fire stations, deteriorating road conditions, and civic responsibility. Opponents most often mention high existing taxes, mistrust of city spending, and objections to merging fire and street funding in a single question. Voters who favored only the sales tax cite burdensome property taxes, while those who prefer only the property tax see sales taxes as too high and regressive. Undecided voters seek clarity on personal financial impact, spending plans, and accountability. To view the survey presentation, click [HERE](#). Scan the QR code or click the link below to participate in the survey.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Carbondale Rural & Fire Protection District 2025 Ballot Measure Survey

The Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District survey voters revealed strong awareness and support for the district's performance. Eighty-one percent of respondents were familiar with the district's services, and 86% approved of the services it provides, including fire, ambulance, and rescue. Only 1% disapproved. Nearly all respondents (91%) said the need for emergency services has increased. Most voters (57%) believed the district uses taxpayer money wisely, while 38% were unsure. When asked about funding options, 60% preferred a sales tax over a property tax increase to fund the district's needs.

Initial testing of potential ballot measures showed strong support for both options. A proposed 1.5% sales and use tax—reducing over time—gained 72% support and only 15% opposition. A separate \$30 million bond for station expansion and workforce housing received 59% support and 23% opposition. Informational messages highlighting increased emergency call volume (up 54% in five years), the need for more full-time firefighters, and the district's reliance on both volunteer and career staff increased support across all demographics. After reading the information, support for the sales tax measure increased to 75%, and support for the bond measure rose to 68%.

When both measures were tested together, 48% said they would vote yes on both, 18% would support only the sales tax, and 7% would support only the bond measure. Overall, the data show that Carbondale area voters overwhelmingly trust their fire district and recognize the growing pressure on emergency services, with large majorities willing to support new funding—primarily through a sales tax increase. To view the survey presentation, click [HERE](#). Scan the QR code or click the link below to take the survey.

[CLICK HERE](#)



How We Prevent Someone From Taking a Survey Multiple Times

We are frequently asked how we prevent respondents or groups of individuals from taking a survey multiple times. Our MMS text survey process assigns a unique survey code to each cell phone number in our voter database. If the survey link is shared with multiple respondents, we can identify that the same survey code appears multiple times. When this occurs, we retain only one survey code for that cell number and remove the duplicates. Additionally, once a respondent completes the survey, the survey link is effectively “closed” and cannot be used to retake the survey.

Provide Respondents a Pleasant Way to Answer Verbatim Questions

Another benefit of our survey data collection methods is that voters can easily and enjoyably answer open-ended questions. Qualitative response data is essential for accurately capturing and understanding opinions. Our approach allows respondents to speak into their electronic devices and share their thoughts. Additionally, our team uses ChatGPT's powerful features to accurately summarize hundreds of open-ended responses.



Magellan Strategies Survey Project Deliverables

Our survey research project deliverables include a topline document, a PowerPoint presentation, open-ended verbatim responses, and crosstabs. Please click the links below to review and download a specific survey deliverable from our 2025 ballot measure survey for the South Metro Fire Rescue District.

**Topline Document - [CLICK HERE](#) Verbatim Responses - [CLICK HERE](#)
Survey Presentation - [CLICK HERE](#) Survey Crosstabs - [CLICK HERE](#)**

Using a Voter File for Stronger Community Engagement

The following is a current voter registration and past election turnout report for the Estes Valley Fire Protection District. We use this information, along with U.S. Census population data, to ensure our survey data accurately reflects the district's voter demographics. Using a voter file to engage residents and voters offers additional benefits.

First, the voter file includes age, gender, and location information, which helps us target our MMS text survey invitations. This is useful when our online platform shows whether a population subgroup is above or below its interview quota. Additionally, we can add cell phone numbers and U.S. Census socioeconomic data to the voter file. This information allows us to direct MMS text survey invitations

to hard-to-reach groups, such as Spanish-speaking residents, households with high poverty levels, or those with lower incomes.

**Estes Valley Fire Protection District
Magellan Strategies Voter Registration and Past Election Turnout Report**

Sex	Registration		2025		2024		2023		2022	
Female	4,171	51.7%	2,199	53.6%	3,401	53.6%	2,414	54.2%	3,002	53.5%
Male	3,891	48.3%	1,900	46.4%	2,940	46.4%	2,043	45.8%	2,613	46.5%
Total	8,062	100.0%	4,098	100.0%	6,340	100.0%	4,457	100.0%	5,615	100.0%

Age Group	Registration		2025		2024		2023		2022	
18-34	1,396	17.3%	270	6.6%	833	13.1%	336	7.5%	507	9.0%
35-44	956	11.9%	315	7.7%	656	10.3%	388	8.7%	486	8.7%
45-54	874	10.8%	348	8.5%	662	10.4%	400	9.0%	576	10.3%
55-64	1,195	14.8%	712	17.4%	1,145	18.1%	812	18.2%	1,125	20.0%
65+	3,641	45.2%	2,453	59.9%	3,044	48.0%	2,521	56.6%	2,921	52.0%
Total	8,062	100.0%	4,098	100.0%	6,340	100.0%	4,457	100.0%	5,615	100.0%

Party	Registration		2025		2024		2023		2022	
Unaffiliated	4,025	49.9%	1,793	43.8%	2,805	44.2%	1,841	41.3%	2,224	39.6%
Democrat	2,003	24.8%	1,236	30.2%	1,819	28.7%	1,385	31.1%	1,762	31.4%
Republican	1,886	23.4%	1,030	25.1%	1,628	25.7%	1,199	26.9%	1,571	28.0%
Libertarian	54	0.7%	15	0.4%	31	0.5%	16	0.4%	33	0.6%
Other	94	1.2%	24	0.6%	57	0.9%	16	0.4%	25	0.4%
Total	8,062	100.0%	4,098	100.0%	6,340	100.0%	4,457	100.0%	5,615	100.0%

Estes Valley Fire Protection District Survey Project Timeline

On average, our ballot measure survey projects take about 30 days to complete from start to finish. However, if a client needs to meet a tight deadline, we can complete a survey project in under 30 days. The questionnaire design phase always takes the most time. The table below outlines each survey phase and the number of days required for each.

Ballot Measure Survey Project Phases							
Estimated Number of Days (36 total)	1	10	2	15	1	4	3
Initial survey meeting & discussion							
Survey questionnaire development & design							
Survey public communication & awareness phase							
Survey data collection phase (MMS Text & promotion)							
Deliver survey toplines & crosstabs							
Deliver survey verbatims, presentation & summary							
Present survey findings to staff, Commissioners, and public meeting (we assume 3 separate meetings)							

The Magellan Strategies Ballot Measure Track Record

Survey research firms involved in ballot measures should provide data showing how accurately they predicted voter support and opposition in past projects. Below is our track record from some of our ballot measure survey projects.

	Magellan Survey Yes %	Actual Yes Result	Difference
City of Lafayette 2025 Mill Levy for Recreation & Facilities	53%	53%	0%
Adams County Five Star Schools 2025 Mill Levy for Staff, CTE, Security	55%	52%	3%
City of Westminster Fire & Roads 2025 Sales Tax for Fire Services & Roads	61%	52%	9%
Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District 2025 Sales & Mill Levy Tax for Operations	59%	60%	1%
Manitou Springs School District 14 2025 Mill Levy Tax for Building Improvements	51%	53%	2%
South Metro Fire Rescue 2025 Mill Levy Tax for Needs	54%	55%	1%
Town of Castle Rock 2024 Sales Tax for Public Safety	57%	55%	2%
Westminster Public Schools 2024 Mill Levy Extension	70%	70%	0%
Arapahoe County 2024 De-Brucing Ballot Measure	60%	70%	10%
City of Leadville 2024 0.5% Sales Tax for Pool	50%	52%	2%
City of Lakewood 2024 De-Bruce Extension for Services	50%	52%	2%
Mesa County Valley School District 51 2024 Sales Tax Extension for Operations	60%	59%	1%
Town of Avon 2024 Use Tax for Housing	57%	53%	4%
Gunnison County Libraries 2024 Mill Levy for Library Constuction	46%	42%	4%
Adams County Five Star Schools 2024 \$830 Million Bond Debt	51%	54%	3%

Estes Valley Fire Protection District Survey Project Pricing

With a voter population of about 8,000, we expect to complete about 400 interviews for a comprehensive “benchmark” survey, similar to the three examples provided. Additionally, all pricing includes offering the survey in both English and Spanish.

Benchmark Survey, 400 Interviews

About 30 to 35 questions..... \$17,500

Summary

We look forward to discussing our proposal with Interim Fire Chief Warren Jones and the Estes Valley Fire Protection District leadership team soon. The following are summaries of other fire district survey projects, reference information, and the biographies of our team members.

South Metro Fire Rescue Ballot Measure Survey, 2025

The South Metro Fire Rescue Ballot Measure Survey interviewed 2,003 registered voters across Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson counties. Seventy-three percent of voters were familiar with the district, and 84% approved of its performance in providing fire and emergency services. However, only 41% believed the district currently has enough financial resources, and just over half (54%) agreed it spends taxpayer money wisely. When given two ballot options, 66% initially supported 0.5% sales and use tax increase, while 57% supported a 3-mill property tax increase. After hearing background on the district’s projected \$270 million revenue loss from state tax changes, population growth, and service demands, support increased significantly. Reference: Chief Government Affairs Office Mike Dell’Orfano, Mike.Dellorfano@SouthMetro.org, Chief Financial Officer Stephanie Corbo, Stephanie.Corbo@SouthMetro.org, 720-989-2232.

City of Westminster Fire Station Funding Survey, 2025

The Westminster Fire and Street Funding Ballot Measure Survey interviewed 1,506 registered voters and found that residents were satisfied with city services and strongly supportive of the fire department but were mixed in their views on road conditions and fiscal management. The Westminster Fire Department earned a 77% approval rating, with 59% saying it spends funds responsibly. Initial support for a proposed 0.35% sales and use tax increase to fund fire and street improvements stood at 61% in favor and 30% opposed. Informational messages highlighting fiscal discipline, emergency service demands, and safety improvements significantly increased support. Overall, the results show strong public confidence in Westminster’s fire services and majority support for a modest sales tax increase. Reference: Deputy City Manager Barbara Opie, bopie@westminsterco.gov, 303-658-2009; Assistant City Manager Chris Lindsey, clindsey@westminsterco.gov, 303-658-2004.

Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District Survey, 2025

The Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District survey of 498 voters showed widespread awareness and support for the district’s work. Eighty-one percent of respondents were aware of the district, and 86% approved of its role in providing fire, ambulance, and rescue services; only 1% disapproved. A large majority—96%—believed the local population has grown over the past five years, and 80% said fire risk has increased. When asked about funding options, 60% preferred a sales tax over a property tax increase to support district needs. Reference: Fire Chief Rob Goodwin, rgoodwin@carbondalearfire.org, Jenny Cutright, Deputy Chief and Public Information Officer, jcutright@carbondalearfire.org, 970-963-2491.

Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Survey, 2023

The Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority Ballot Measure Survey, conducted with 575 respondents, found that 78% of respondents were familiar with the Authority's operations, and 91% approved of its work providing fire protection and emergency medical services. A majority (61%) agreed the Authority spends taxpayer funds wisely, and 68% said fire risk in their area has increased in recent years. Testing a proposed \$26 million bond measure to expand and modernize Fire Station 42 in El Jebel showed strong majority support. 68% said they would vote yes, compared to 23% who said no and 9% who were undecided. Overall, the findings reveal overwhelming community trust in the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority and broad support for funding upgrades to emergency infrastructure. Reference: Fire Chief Scott Thompson, sthompson@roaringforkfire.org, 970-340-7040, Hilary Fletcher, hilary.fletcher@woolpert.com, 970-379-2413.

Cortez Fire Protection District Survey, 2023

The Cortez Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Survey, conducted with 580 registered voters, found strong public awareness and support for the district's services. Three out of four respondents (76%) said they were familiar with the district, and 81% approved of its performance. Most voters (61%) said wildfire risk has increased in recent years, and an even higher 76% said the need for emergency services has grown. Initial testing of the proposed 6.78-mill property tax increase, which would raise about \$1 million annually, showed that 62% of respondents would vote yes and 27% would vote no. Support increased across all demographics after voters were given details about staffing shortages, aging equipment, and overlapping emergency calls. Reference: Battalion Chief Rick Spencer, rspencer@cortezfire.com, Operations/HR Manager Denise Sanchez, dsanchez@cortezfire.com, 970-565-3157.

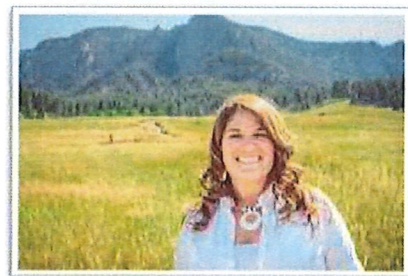
City of Wellington Fire Protection District Funding Survey, 2025

The Wellington Fire Protection District Ballot Measure Survey interviewed 520 registered voters and found strong community support for the district, but lingering doubts about its financial management. Most voters believed community needs were increasing; 67% said wildfire risk has grown, and 82% said emergency calls are rising. Initial testing of a proposed 0.5% sales tax to support operations and equipment upgrades showed that 61% of voters favored it, 25% opposed, and 13% were undecided. Seventy-three percent were more likely to support the measure after hearing it would maintain 24/7 service, 75% after learning about a 35% increase in calls since 2018, and 78% after being told it would fund wildfire readiness and safety equipment. Reference: Fire Chief Todd Germain, tgermain@wfpd.org, 970-568-3232.

The Magellan Strategies Team

Courtney Sievers, MPA, Director of Survey Research

Since 2009, Courtney Sievers has served as Director of Survey Research at Magellan Strategies, bringing over ten years of expertise and a proven record of delivering actionable insights through survey research. Specializing in public policy, ballot measures, and community analysis, she has successfully led hundreds of projects and become the go-to expert for organizations aiming to gauge public opinion on complex legislative and policy issues.

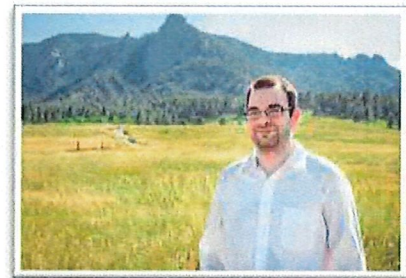


Courtney excels at generating questions that accurately reflect voter opinions, even on the most nuanced topics. Whether your goal is securing funding through a ballot measure, testing campaign messaging, or understanding voter priorities, Courtney's sharp analytical skills and strategic approach ensure your survey produces reliable, clear, and effective results. Her dedication to building strong, personal relationships with each client sets her apart from other project managers. She is not just a consultant for the project's duration; she is a partner invested in your long-term success. By taking the time to thoroughly understand your organization's needs, she tailors each project to align with your goals, ultimately helping you communicate the value and impact of your initiatives in a way that resonates with voters.

Courtney holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics with a concentration in Statistics from Colorado Mesa University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver. She lives in Arvada with her husband, Jake, and their two children, Riley and Sammy. When she's not assisting clients with complex survey projects or chasing her two young kids, you can find her hitting the slopes, watching the Broncos, praying for the Rockies, or cheering on the Nuggets and Avs.

Ryan Winger, Polling Project Manager and Ballot Measure Consultant

Ryan Winger has been an essential leader at Magellan since our founding in 2007 and currently serves as our Director of Survey Data Analysis and Polling Project Manager. With over ten years of experience, Ryan is an expert in data analysis, helping communities better understand their residents and voters to create effective outreach and campaign strategies. His skills include voter data development, survey design, ballot measure campaign consulting, and ballot language strategy, providing our clients with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed.



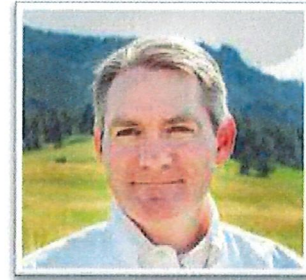
Throughout his career at Magellan, Ryan has overseen various ballot measure surveys, helping school districts, local governments, and public policy organizations across the state. He has extensive experience in using survey research to develop compelling messages that inform residents and voters. What clients appreciate most about Ryan is that this experience is combined with a collaborative approach that respects and recognizes the unique details of each project, ensuring their strengths and assets are leveraged into effective strategies that enhance community outreach, engagement, and education.

He has extensive experience managing bond measures and MLO campaigns for Colorado school districts. He is especially proud of his work with 27J Schools in 2022, where he helped lead the "I Am 27J" campaign to a successful mill levy override after more than 20 years of setbacks. Ryan recognizes that each project is unique. The most rewarding part of his job is learning about clients' individual strengths and challenges and assisting them in crafting the right messages to tell their stories and reach their goals.

Ryan graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in Political Science. He lives in Frederick with his wife, Vicki, and their three children, Emmalyn, Easton, and Everly. Ryan is a huge college basketball fan and supports the Kansas Jayhawks.

David Flaherty, CEO and Founder

David Flaherty is the CEO and founder of Magellan Strategies. He has dedicated his 33-year career to designing and conducting hundreds of survey research projects that measure residents' and voters' opinions. David is an expert in public opinion polling, focus group moderation, and voter data analysis.



Before founding Magellan Strategies in 2006, David spent fourteen years working in Washington, DC. During this period, he mastered voter opinion research, questionnaire design, message development, and analysis of voter demographic trends while employed at the Republican National Committee, the U.S. House of Representatives (Subcommittee on the Census), Americans for Prosperity, and a small government relations firm.

For the past sixteen years, David has guided the growth of the Magellan team by delivering top-notch, professional survey research services to local governments, school districts, special districts, and public policy organizations. He takes great pride in assisting more than 300 Colorado governments in securing voter approval for various funding ballot measures.

David hails from Wellesley, Massachusetts, and graduated from the University of Delaware in 1991. He resides in Broomfield, Colorado, with his wife, Jennifer, and their two sons, Jack and Bobby. An avid skier, golfer, and mountain biker, David also serves on the board of the Five Star Foundation, which supports the Adams 12 Five Star School District.

Public Information and External Communication Strategy

(Items in *bold italics* are in process now)

Objectives

- Rebuild and reinforce public trust.
- Provide a well-developed and robust community communications plan.
- Position the district to successfully compete for limited financial resources.
- Enhance traditional fire prevention and wildfire risk reduction outreach and education.
- Enhance recruitment, retention and support of volunteer firefighters.
- Educate community on the importance and value of volunteer response system.
- Educate community on district services, organization, governance, management and funding.
- Provide crisis communications.
- Provide real-time incident information.

Target Audiences

- Estes Valley residents.
- Local opinion leaders.
- Internal stakeholders (board, volunteer, staff).
- Economic stakeholders (small businesses, lodging and hospitality industry, major employers).
- Town of Estes Park and Larimer County.
- Response, planning and risk reduction partners.
- Local and regional news media.

Programmatic approaches

1. Social media.
 - a. Teachable moments based on recent incidents and public safety issues in the news.
 - b. *Personal interest, firefighter of the month, promotions, awards, etc.***
 - c. Current district news.
 - d. *Real-time incident information.***
2. ***Community and special event tables (already several planned, auxiliary participation)***

3. Service clubs and other community organization presentations.
4. News media contact
 - a. **Traditional media releases on major incidents and policy issues.**
 - b. **Opinion pieces on major policy issues, When the Bell Rings**
 - c. Monthly articles on seasonal topics.
 - d. Weekly incident statistics.
5. High quality video and photos for posting on website.
6. **Website updating, coordination and maintenance.**
7. Fire station open houses.
8. Citizen fire academy.
9. Newsletter.

Organization

- Managed through the fire chief office.
- Part-time employee for coordination and content development.
- Assistance from auxiliary members.
- Consultant/contractor for technical advice, program development and video development.

When the Bell Rings

- March: Volunteers and 2025 awards
- April: Wildfire
- May: New Fire Chief process
- June: What is a fire district, governance, funding, relationship with town
- July: Combination staffing, what it is and how it works
- August: New fire chief introduction