

Sales Tax Election



**YOU'RE
INVITED**

TOWN HALL MEETING
7:00 pm
Tuesday, April 21, 2015
Klein Volunteer Fire Dept.
Administration Building
16810 Squyres Rd.
Klein, TX 77379

Town Hall Meeting April 21st to discuss your fire service

Harris County Emergency Services District No. 16 (ESD 16) invites residents to participate in a Town Hall meeting to discuss fire protection, emergency responses and an upcoming sales tax election.

The meeting will start at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at the Klein Volunteer Fire Department Administration Building located at 16810 Squyres Rd., Klein, Texas 77379.

ESD 16 is the local government entity responsible for providing fire protection and emergency response

in and around the Klein area. It funds the Klein Volunteer Fire Department, which serves a population roughly equal to the size of Midland, Wichita Falls or Texarkana. [See the map on Page 3.]

Klein VFD currently staffs five stations with career firefighters during the week day. At night and on weekends, volunteer firefighters respond to fire and rescue calls from seven stations.

ESD 16's Board of Commissioners

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Growth in the District

Population increases and KVFD's goal to maintain the same level of service

When ESD 16 was originally formed in 1984, it served a population of about 50,000 people. Today, that number has tripled, and more people are coming every year.

Oil prices may have slumped, but the Houston area remains a magnet for companies and jobs. One survey put the Houston area number two on the list of corporate relocations.

When these folks get to the Klein area, who puts out their fires and pulls them out of wrecks? The Klein Volunteer Fire Department.

Growth means many challenges for emergency service providers.

More calls for help: It stands to reason: More people mean
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Ladder trucks, which cost approximately \$1.2 million, are necessary for big-footprint buildings in a growing area.

Questions and answers about your fire protection

Q: Who provides our fire and rescue protection?

A: The Klein Volunteer Fire Department provides the fire and rescue protection in our community. Harris County Emergency Services District No. 16 is the local government entity responsible for fire protection and emergency response in a 50 square mile area of north-western Harris County, which includes the Klein area. The ESD is overseen by five elected Commissioners, and ESD 16 contracts with Klein Volunteer Fire Department as its service provider.

Q: What is an emergency services district?

A: Emergency services districts are political subdivisions of the state of Texas similar to school districts or municipal utility districts. An emergency services district (ESD) can provide fire protection, emergency medical response or both. There are more than 310 ESDs in Texas, 32 of which are inside Harris County.

Q: Where does our local ESD get its money?

A: ESD 16 is able to levy a maximum property tax of 5 cents per \$100 of property value. Put another way, if you have taxable property worth \$100, you pay a nickel in property tax.

Currently the District levies a property tax of 4.912 cents per \$100 of property value. So a home on the tax roll with a taxable value of \$250,000 currently pays \$122.80 a year – a little more than \$10 a month. These funds are used to provide equipment, fire stations and trained, professional firefighters available to respond in an emergency.

ESD 16 is at its limit on its property tax rate since voters have not authorized ESD 16 to go above 5 cents per \$100 of property value. The Texas constitution allows ESDs, with voter approval, to tax up to 10 cents per \$100 of property value. However, this election is about sales tax.

Q: Why is the ESD calling a sales tax election?

A: Growth. To keep up with the growing population in our area, ESD 16's Board of Commissioners has identi-

fied four primary needs for the next ten years: (1) additional equipment for making fire and rescue responses; (2) increased volunteer and paid staffing; (3) remodeling existing stations; (4) and constructing a new station in the Gleannloch Farms area. All these needs will require additional revenue.

Q: How much money will the sales tax provide?

A: The following is an estimate, but \$1.5 million to \$2 million a year is anticipated.

Q: How will the sales tax money be used?

A: The sales tax will initially be used to help with funding for:

- Replacement of ladder engines and tanker trucks;
- Building and equipping a new station in the Gleannloch Farms area;
- Renovating stations so volunteer firefighters are stationed there overnight, thus reducing the time it takes to get help to emergencies; and
- Increasing weekday staffing to four career firefighters per station.

Q: Will this affect my property taxes?

A: **No.** ESD 16 is not asking for a property tax increase.

Q: How will this affect what I pay at the store?

A: Most residents of ESD 16 will probably notice little change. The maximum sales tax that can be collected is 8.25 percent – 6.25 percent goes to the State of Texas, and 2 percent is reserved for local jurisdictions.

Most residents are already paying the maximum sales tax if they purchase taxable items in Houston or in areas where municipal utility districts, in agreements with the City of Houston, are already at the maximum.

Q: How much will this increased tax rate cost?

A: If you bought \$100 worth of taxable good before the sales tax rate increase, you would pay \$107.25. If the new sales tax rate is implemented, on the same \$100 worth of taxable goods, you would now pay \$108.25

MEETING *From Page 1*

has called a sales tax election for May 9, 2015 asking voters to consider a sales and use tax of 1% in the district territory.

That would raise the current sales tax from 7.25 percent of taxable sales to 8.25 percent.

It is hoped that a sales tax increase of 1% will raise an estimated \$1.5 million to \$2 million a year for use

inside ESD 16. ESD 16 currently receives all of its revenue from property taxes alone. These taxes generate about \$5 million a year.

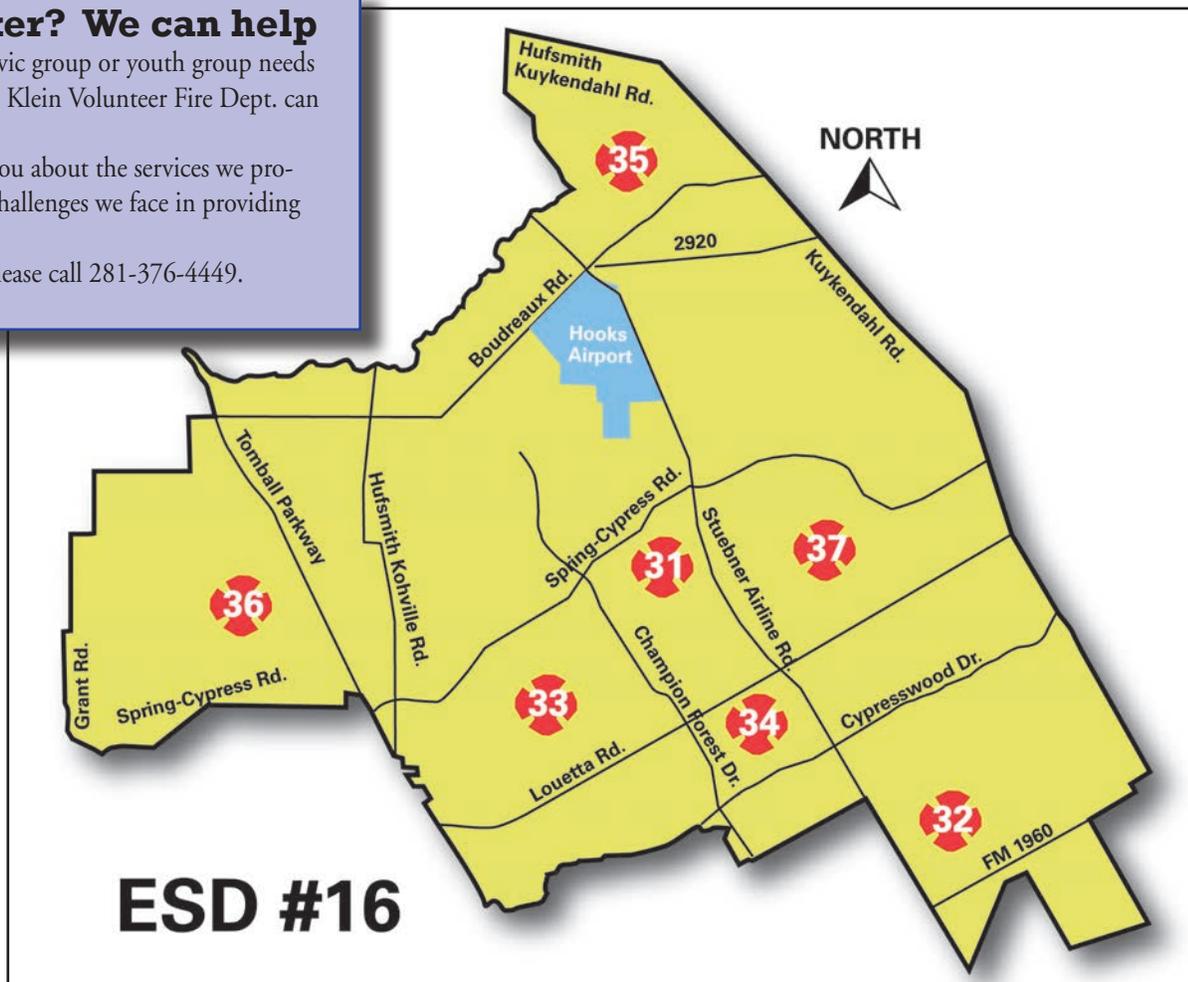
“Voters will decide the future course of their fire protection and emergency response on May 9th,” said Fire Chief Andy Dexter. “We hope these meetings will give the voters the information they need to make an informed decision.”

Need a speaker? We can help

If your church, club, civic group or youth group needs a speaker, ESD 16 and the Klein Volunteer Fire Dept. can help.

We'll be happy to tell you about the services we provide. We can explain the challenges we face in providing fire and rescue protection.

To arrange a speaker, please call 281-376-4449.



GROWTH *From Page 1*

more calls for help. In the past five years, the number of calls for help that Klein Volunteer Fire Dept. responded to has risen 23 percent.

Most of the calls – about 58 percent – came in the evening between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. and are handled by volunteer firefighters. In the daytime, when volunteers are normally out-of-the-ESD working in their regular jobs, career firefighters staff the five KVFD stations.

But Fire Chief Andy Dexter says he has “noticed that the number of daytime calls is increasing, which may be an indication that the number of people working in the District territory – rather than commuting into Houston – is increasing.” That, he says, speeds the need for investment.

Demand on current equipment: More calls mean that Klein Volunteer Fire Department fire engines are on the road more, cutting short their useful lives and increasing the need for ESD 16 to purchase replacement equipment. A ladder engine typically costs approximately \$1.2 million. A standard fire pumper truck routinely costs about \$500,000. Each fire truck is custom-made to order.

More delays: You live this every day. With more people, there is more traffic. If it takes longer for you to get to work, it is taking longer for ESD 16 equipment to get to the scene of an emergency.

Fire department officials have developed a five-year plan to confront the challenges of this growth.

The May 9 Sales Tax Election

EARLY VOTING

9am - 5pm

April 27-May 5

(Except Sundays)

Klein Volunteer Fire Dept.
Administration Building
16810 Squyres Rd.
Klein, TX 77379

ELECTION DAY

7am - 7pm

Saturday, May 9

Klein Volunteer Fire Dept.
Administration Building
16810 Squyres Rd.
Klein, TX 77379

**HARRIS COUNTY
EMERGENCY SERVICE DISTRICT NO. 16
KLEIN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

16810 Squires Road
Klein, TX 77379

STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRING, TX
PERMIT NO. 222

*JOIN US 7:00 PM APRIL 21, 2015 AT KVFD ADMINISTRATION BLDG., 16810 SQUIRES RD.
FOR A TOWN HALL MEETING REGARDING A SALES TAX ELECTION*



SALES TAX BASICS

In Texas, the sales tax on covered items cannot exceed 8.25 percent. Of that amount, 6.25 percent goes to the State of Texas. The remaining two percent is reserved for local governments, such as ESDs.

In ESD 16, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County collects a 1% sales tax, which leaves 1% for other local jurisdictions.

Most residents are already paying the 8.25 percent maximum, because much of their shopping is in the City of Houston extra-territorial jurisdiction, which is already at the maximum rate.

Sales tax reduces the reliance on property tax to fund ESD 16's firefighting protection through the Klein VFD.

Additionally, when a visitor – driving through ESD 16 – purchases a taxable item during the trip through the territory, the sales tax collected helps reduce the expense to property taxpayers living within the District. The additional 1% of sales tax revenue generated by such sales would be available to fund ESD 16 fire protection and emergency response activities.

If the City of Houston were to expand its agreements regarding sales tax further into the ESD 16 territory, such revenue would not be available for fire and rescue services provided by Klein VFD.

Response to an emergency call:

**Klein VFD and ESD 16
know it is important to
get help to you fast**

Heart attack. Motor vehicle accident. House fire. These are events that can sometimes change your life. ESD 16 and the Klein VFD realize that, these occurrences are time-sensitive and require a high level of initial care to improve survivability.

ESD 16 and Klein VFD try to respond as quickly as possible.

The needs that would be funded with the proposed sales tax are expected to improve Klein VFD's response. These needs include:

- (1) Having more people available to staff the station day or night;
- (2) Remodeling current fire stations to allow volunteers to staff the stations overnight with the goal of reducing response times;
- (3) Constructing a new station in Gleannloch Farms to help reduce the response time in that area and areas growing around the Grand Parkway; and
- (4) Purchasing additional equipment for making fire and rescue responses.