



# SOUTH KING FIRE & RESCUE



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: Proposition 1

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## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South King Fire and Rescue (SKF&R) hired Liz Loomis Public Affairs to develop a Strategic Communications Plan to educate and outreach to the public about Proposition 1. This ballot measure is scheduled to be on the Primary Election ballot in August 2010.

There are three significant parts to this plan. First, it offers four key messages to be used in all communication and public outreach efforts. Second, the plan provides an itemized list of communication methods and projects that SKF&R should employ for message delivery. Finally, it includes a timeline for when these activities should take place.

A fall election date is important to avoid any backlash that may result from state budget discussions and possible referendums in April. An August election also enables SKF&R to run Proposition 1 on the November General Election ballot if it should fail. This would take advantage of any resources already spent on educating and outreaching to the public.

SKF&R has a high approval rating (77 percent) and a history of passing its levy lid lifts. However, public support for Proposition 1 is far from a sure thing. While the ballot measure needs 60 percent, only 51 percent are willing to support it at this time. In addition, 34 percent are primed to oppose new tax increases regardless of the issue. To make matters more difficult, support declines (49 percent) the more people learn about Proposition 1 because it is a confusing topic. Even the words “benefit charge” are problematic, which is why SKF&R should refer to the ballot measure by its title “Proposition 1” at all times.

This was an unusual plan to develop. Strategic Communication Plans are usually exhaustive in scope and method about a single issue, such as a ballot measure. This plan, however, divides its time between three issues – district finances, SKF&R’s financial management skills, and Proposition 1. When it comes to the ballot measure, a baseline of information will be provided that defines it simply as a way the public can maintain emergency service levels, such as response times and training for personnel, similar to past levy lid lifts. Additional materials and staff time will be available for people who want more information.

Business groups will be actively targeted with additional information through public presentations. For this subgroup, Proposition 1 will be further defined by how it makes SKF&R more accountable to the public through the rate-setting process and lowers property taxes by the amount of revenue collected. Savings from sprinkler credits and insurance rates for businesses will also be addressed.



This plan walks a fine line. It educates the public without providing too many details about a ballot measure that is confusing and could result in a “No” vote. SKF&R staff must be exact in its execution of this plan to realize the full benefit. SKF&R should monitor neighboring fire districts to see if their earned media efforts and messages might impact this plan, as well.

Upon approval, this plan becomes a blueprint for all communication activities involving Proposition 1 through August of 2010. This is a flexible, working document that can be adjusted as new information is presented or unanticipated challenges arise.



### III. KEY MESSAGES

This section of the Strategic Communications Plan outlines the key messages as identified by Liz Loomis Public Affairs. Key messages represent the main ideas to communicate to taxpayers throughout the year in anticipation of Proposition 1 being on the August Primary ballot. Key messages highlight the positives of SKF&R, as well as address priorities of taxpayers. They are repeated in all communications with the public and media.

#### 1. Thank you for supporting your fire department.

*Your past support means that we can respond to emergencies with trained personnel and life-saving equipment within 4 to 6 minutes on average. We are thankful for your personal and financial support and will work hard every day to earn your trust.*

The first key message is an important appeal to the public. Fire districts often ask for what they need, but seldom say thank you as often as is needed. It's also important to remind the public that SKF&R shares their priorities of fast response times and trained personnel, and doesn't take its taxpayers for granted. The words "fire department" have been chosen to personalize an otherwise large fire district.

#### 2. Effectively managing your tax dollars is important to us.

*Being good stewards of your tax dollars is important to us, as well. Both our Fire Chief and CFO have degrees in advanced financial practices. We have a history of clean financial audits and operate under a balanced budget, making cuts when needed and provided they won't compromise public safety.*

The second key message reassures taxpayers that SKF&R is a fiscally responsible and cost-effective operation. This message can counteract any residual damage from the embezzlement. It also sets up the issue that budget cuts compromise service levels.

#### 3. The economy is hurting our ability to maintain emergency service levels.

*Property values have fallen, reducing the amount of revenue we receive by \$3.5 million. Budget cuts and reserve funds alone can't fill this gap. If we can't maintain funding, our fire department will need to layoff firefighters and response times will increase. This would impact*



*our Class 2 rating as a fire department, which could increase insurance rates for businesses – something none of us want to see happen in this difficult economy.*

The third message raises awareness for SKF&R’s funding shortfall, and introduces the consequences of continuing things “as is.” It’s important to be specific with taxpayers about what cuts are planned and be prepared to act to maintain credibility with the public.

#### **4. Proposition 1 maintains emergency service levels for your fire department.**

*Like other ballot measures you have supported, Proposition 1 maintains emergency service response levels that our families and businesses have said they want. It increases accountability through the public rate-setting process, and lowers property taxes by the amount of revenue collected. You also may save money with sprinkler credits and insurance rates for businesses.*

This message introduces Proposition 1 as the solution to the funding crisis. It also highlights details of the ballot measure that the public wants to see according to the poll.



#### IV. TARGET AUDIENCE

This section of the Strategic Communications Plan identifies SKF&R's base of support, as well as where additional outreach is needed. SKF&R must educate all households equally, but it can target articles and information to certain demographic groups via external publications, groups or events.

SKF&R's core support is coming from:

- 18-34 Year Olds
- Women (< 45, Democrats & Independents)
- Seniors
- 4/4 Voters

SKF&R needs to outreach to the following demographic groups:

- 35-59 Year Olds
- Men (<45, Independents)
- Men (All ages, Democrats)
- Women (Republicans)
- New Residents

Eighty percent of voters in the August election will likely be older than 45 years of age. Middle-aged people have a natural sensitivity to taxes and spending as they approach retirement or plan to send children to college. Men especially are skeptical about government agencies and how their tax dollars are spent. This plan makes a special effort to connect with these groups, as well as outreaches to new residents who aren't familiar with SKF&R.



## V. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR MESSAGE DELIVERY

The polling data and interviews with staff were instrumental in helping prioritize what communication projects and events should be part of this final plan. Paid communication projects are the backbone of this plan because it enables SKF&R to control message, timing and delivery. Earned media supplements this plan because of its cost-effectiveness. Other communication methods are suggested as a way to appeal to different demographic groups that might not be reached through traditional methods.

### A. Paid Communications

SKF&R is a large enough fire district that its communication materials should be professionally designed. Make sure in-house personnel are trained on and have access to professional design software to give materials a more polished look. All printed materials described below should be posted to the web site when completed.

#### 1. Newsletter

Polling indicated that 55 percent of residents want to receive information about SKF&R through a printed newsletter. In the past, SKF&R mailed an 11x17, four-page, full-color newsletter twice a year. LLPA recommends that SKF&R send a two-page (one-page, double sided), two-color newsletter four times a year to all households. Recent surveys show that two pages is the approximate amount of information people can process.

Make the Chief's message and photo the first thing a reader sees. Place it on the outside page above the fold. This is important as he is the primary messenger for Proposition 1. Please note that Proposition 1 is only mentioned in the July 30<sup>th</sup> newsletter edition. State law says that fire districts may mention a ballot proposition in an article and also do one additional piece of mail, which is described later in this report.

Make sure to do a voter file overlay to the saturated carrier route list currently being used. This can help pick up thousands of registered voters receiving mail outside fire district boundaries that might not be receiving communications from SKF&R.

The poll also showed that 30 percent of residents would like to receive the newsletter by email. SKF&R should collect email addresses for rapid communication. However, it will have to continue sending the newsletter to all households by regular mail. The current



delivery method used is the least expensive for postage costs. It is not possible to delete households that want the newsletter via email without switching to more expensive postage rate.

The more that people read the newsletter, the more likely they are to support SKF&R. Extra copies should be prominently placed in all fire station waiting areas. Employees should see the newsletter on break room bulletin boards, and receive copies via email. Suggestions for newsletter content and drop dates are as follows:

2010 Drop Date	Lead Story	Story 2	Story 3
End of February	Message from the Chief: How economy is adversely impacting budget despite aggressive budget cuts; tough decisions Commissioners will have to make if service levels can't be maintained	SKF&R has passed all its independent financial audits	Big community thank you for past support of levy lid lifts, toy drives, etc.
Early May	Message from the Chief: Commissioners discuss specific cuts i.e. layoffs & increased response times if service levels can't be maintained	Saving taxpayer dollars is important & examples of what SKF&R is doing	Proud of average response times for fire and medical emergencies and personnel that save lives
July 30	Introduce Proposition 1 with details of where to find more information and a special email address for the public to contact the Chief with questions	Schedule of public meetings to learn more about Proposition 1	
After General Election but prior to Thanksgiving	Message from the Chief: Thank community for their support regardless of outcome, next steps after ballot measure		



## 2. On-Hold Message System

SKF&R has a message system that is another paid communication resource. Staff records customized messages that callers hear when they are on hold before being transferred. Record some brief messages that are abbreviated versions of the stories that will be covered in the newsletter. Repeating the same message is important for it to penetrate.

The most important message should start running at the end of July and say “Proposition 1 is on your August Primary Election ballot. Proposition 1 maintains emergency service levels, including response times and trained personnel, for your fire department. For more information, visit South King Fire and Rescue’s website at [www.southkingfire.org](http://www.southkingfire.org).”

## 3. Brochures

SKF&R can’t do persuasion mail, but it can develop factual information pieces that make its case. LLPA recommends developing two such information pieces, designed as self-mailers, to help communicate basic information and priorities to residents. Provide all employees at SKF&R with copies to educate them about programs, services and the budget so they can respond to questions when interacting with the public.

### a. Welcome to South King Fire & Rescue

This introductory brochure provides an overview of SKF&R. It already exists, but needs to be updated for 2010 to reflect the current priorities of SKF&R and its taxpayers. Here are the suggested changes:

- Minimize use of the patch and feature the words *Welcome to South King Fire & Rescue* as the title. Professional design training and software will help here.
- The photo and personal message from the Chief should reflect the key messages in this document. (Suggested text is drafted for the home page of the web site below.)
- Update the facts and figures section, and break out responses by fire and emergency medical service. Add average response times. Explain why a Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating is important to the public especially businesses.
- Simply list out the services Emergency Medical Responses, Fire Suppression & Prevention, Public Safety & Education. The Special Teams listing requires further explanation, and can keep its bullet points.



- Eliminate the map and station locations, but provide basic contact information. Prominently feature the URL to drive people to the web site for more information.
- Add a section on the budget – but make it simple. Use graphs to show declining revenues, reserves and increasing expenses. (This needs to make a case for Proposition 1.)

This brochure should be updated each year and sent to all new residents on a quarterly basis. For budgeting purposes, the number of new residents as of December 1, 2008 was 1,498 (or 1,385 households), which means it can be bulk mailed for extra savings.

#### b. Financial Update

In addition to a newsletter article, state law allows SKF&R to send one piece of mail that provides factual information about Proposition 1. This brochure fills that allowance, but also educates the public about district finances.

Forty-four percent of those polled did not think the economy had adversely impacted their fire district. This is the chance to tell SKF&R's story. Producing an information piece like this also emphasizes how important financial transparency is to SKF&R, which increases taxpayer confidence.

Here's a brief outline of what the piece should contain: Start with a personal message from the Chief that identifies the number of calls for fire and emergency medical service. Make the assertion that you want the public to know how their tax dollars save lives!

Mention budget cuts and savings, the fact that the district is independently audited and operates under a balanced budget. Provide the public with an overview of revenue and expenditures from available data. Visually represent how unstable the current revenue stream is with property taxes when looking at current service level costs. Then show forecasted revenue streams as more stable under Proposition 1 when applied to the same variable. Mention that Proposition 1 will maintain service levels for the fire department and that it will be on the Primary Election ballot on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Finally, refer them to SKF&R's web site for more information and provide them with a special email to send questions to the Chief.

This brochure should be sent to all households as a separate mail piece. Design it differently than the newsletter. Do not include it as an insert in the newsletter or as part of the Annual Report. It needs to be its own document.



c. Frequently Asked Questions Jumbo Card

It's normal to anticipate that SKF&R will receive quite a few questions about Proposition 1. In fact, the public is encouraged to contact their Chief directly through a special email address for just this purpose. Consolidate these questions and create a card that can be distributed at public events or presentations in August after ballots drop. Post the card to the web site at the location indicated below.

Refer to the ballot measure as Proposition 1 throughout the piece after defining it once at the beginning. Let the public know that neighboring fire districts have passed the same ballot measure. Highlight that property taxes are lowered by the amount of revenue collected, and that the public decides where to set that rate through a series of public meetings. Let them know that Proposition 1 allows credits for sprinklers and lower insurance rates for businesses. Mention special classes, like assisted living facilities, that might receive exemptions.

4. Fire District Update - DVD

As mentioned before, repeating a message is the key to penetration. Video record the Chief presenting the outlined PowerPoint described in this plan. Make sure to intersperse the Chief speaking with different slides that visually describe the financial situation facing SKF&R. Chief Church should be comfortably seated in shirtsleeves (not white), and facing the camera directly. His tone should be well-modulated, friendly and conversational.

Post the video on SKF&R's web site home page and YouTube to gain an audience with a younger demographic. Promote it via the web site, media release, automated call system and social media networks. Send a copy to local cable companies and ask that it be run on government access channels.

5. Web Site Pages

SKF&R has a lot of useful information on its web site, but it needs to be personalized. The home page should have a welcome message from the Chief with his picture using the key messages from this document. Here is suggested text that can also be used for other materials created by the district:



*Welcome to South King Fire & Rescue! We're glad you dropped by to learn more about the fire and emergency medical services we provide to more than 165,000 residents in Greater Federal Way and Des Moines.*

*I want to thank you for supporting your fire department. Your tax dollars enable us to respond to emergencies with trained personnel and life-saving equipment in an average of four to six minutes. Being good stewards of your tax dollars is important to us, as well. We have a history of clean financial audits, and operate under a balanced budget making cuts when needed provided they don't compromise public safety.*

*Our biggest issue for 2010 is how the economy is hurting our ability to maintain emergency service levels. Property values have fallen, reducing the amount of revenue we receive by \$3.5 million. Budget cuts and reserve funds alone can't fill this gap after 2010. Layoffs and increased response times are likely if we can't maintain service levels for our fire department.*

*South King Fire & Rescue is looking at different funding options that will maintain emergency services for our families and businesses. More information will be provided as it becomes available. In the meantime, enjoy our web site and the information it provides. And, again, thank you for your time and support. We will work hard every day to earn your trust.*

*Sincerely,*

*CHIEF AL CHURCH*

When the Commissioners pass a resolution to put Proposition 1 on the ballot, change the last paragraph to:

*South King Fire & Rescue is putting Proposition 1 on the August Primary Election ballot to maintain emergency service levels. [Click here](#) for more information about Proposition 1 as it becomes available, or [email me personally](#) with your questions. In the*



*meantime, enjoy our web site and the information it provides. And, again, thank you for your time and support. We will work hard every day to earn your trust.*

*Sincerely,*

*CHIEF AL CHURCH*

When taxpayers click on the link to learn more about Proposition 1, there should be a new page with additional links to the informational materials. Such materials should include past newsletters, the Financial Update, FAQs, and the Chief's DVD. Provide links to the Annual Report for 2009 and the Strategic Plan, as well. All those spreadsheets SKF&R has been working on? Provide links to them here. The point is to provide the public with as much information as possible to help them make an informed decision. Be sure to take this information off the web site and replace the welcome message when the election is over.

## B. Earned Media

Earned media, or distributing information through local news sources, is one of the most cost-effective ways to educate the public about emergency services and programs offered by SKF&R. It is important to develop positive working relationships with reporters, editors or producers that cover your service territory.

### 1. Media List

The first step to an effective earned media effort is to develop a comprehensive list of resources that could publish information from SKF&R. Most taxpayers rely on the weekly as opposed to daily papers for news. As a result, the *Federal Way Mirror*, *Federal Way News*, and *The Des Moines News* should be considered first tier media.

*The Seattle Times*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Online*, *The Tacoma News Tribune* and major network television and radio stations should be on the first tier list, as well. Another first tier group would be community blog sites for greater Federal Way and Des Moines, like Waterland Blog. The web should be closely monitored to see if new blogs develop.



It's important to have the contact information of the reporter, editor or producer who is assigned to follow SKF&R as opposed to blindly sending in news releases. Larger publications and stations will have different reporters for business issues, community affairs, public safety, public policy, and politics. Email is a readily accepted and preferred way to deliver media releases, but know phone numbers for a quick call back if they contact SKF&R with follow up questions.

A similar contact list should be created for secondary media sources that reach taxpayers. These could include:

- Assisted living facilities
- Chambers of commerce and business-related groups
- Churches or other religious groups, including those of ethnic groups
- Elected officials – local, state and federal
- Environmental groups
- Firefighters and employees (current or retired) that live in the district
- Granges
- Homeowner associations
- Hunting or other outdoor clubs
- Minority publications
- Non-profit organizations
- Political parties at the county and state legislative district levels
- Professional groups and unions
- Senior centers
- School district publications
- Service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Masons, Eagles, Elks, Soroptomists, Zonta, or those unique to your service territory)
- Social or athletic clubs
- Women's groups



Contacts for trade journals and association publications are considered media outlets, too. However, the primary goal is to focus on those sources that reach SKF&R taxpayers as opposed to professional insider groups.

## 2. Media Releases

This section of the Strategic Communications Plan provides ideas on strategy, timing and content for media releases for SKF&R over the next several months. SKF&R currently sends two to three media releases a month, which can include emergency and accident reporting.

The district is large enough that it should consider increasing its earned media efforts to one non-incident news release per week. It also should look at ways to deliver its message through the media using letters to the editor or opinion-editorial pieces. Regular topics should be district funding and finance issues. Other topics could be current events, monthly commissioner meetings, staff promotions or accomplishments, community events, public education, district-sponsored classes, printed reports, and safety.

The suggested media releases below tell SKF&R's story of strong financial management, impacts to the budget from a poor economy, and forecasted cuts if service levels cannot be maintained through Proposition 1. The media releases also mirror the articles found in the newsletter. Send the media releases prior to mailing the newsletter for the best chance of coverage.

Some media releases need to be distributed following a regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, as indicated by (MEET). These topics should be scheduled as discussion items on the agenda, and the conclusion of the board should be reflected in the meeting minutes. A media release should be drafted, approved and issued the next day.

Letters to the editor (LTE) and opinion-editorials (OP) are strategic ways to get information published, particularly for things that might be dry like emergency call volumes and statistics. Having the Chief send a personal communication is a great way to educate the public and secure coverage for SKF&R.



Month	Media Release 1	Media Release 2
Jan 2010	SKF&R available to speak at service clubs and functions	SKF&R history of clean financial audits
Feb	How economy is adversely impacting budget despite aggressive budget cuts; need to stabilize funding to maintain service levels or consider layoffs; more details forthcoming <b>(OP)</b>	Sign up for important information updates from your fire department via Facebook and Twitter
Mar	Call statistics and response times – 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	Budget cuts to save taxpayers money
Apr	Public invited to Commissioner meeting to discuss stabilizing funding	Commissioners discuss funding options and service level cuts if funding can't be maintained <b>(MEET)</b>
May	Proposition 1 resolution passed; more details will be made available on district web site as they become available <b>(MEET)</b>	Fire District Update DVD available
Jun	Proud of personnel for average response times – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter <b>(LTE)</b>	Update on revenue forecast for district
Jul	Repeat proposed cuts that will happen if Proposition 1 fails <b>(MEET)</b>	What money from Proposition 1 pays for: fast response times, personnel training and life-saving equipment; refer public to web site for more information
Aug	Schedule of public meetings to learn more about Proposition 1, special email address for questions of Chief	Once election results are determined, but not certified: Results of Prop 1 and next step <b>(OP)</b>

### 3. Spokesperson Training

A spokesperson is a figurehead for an organization. She or he needs to be able to think strategically and politically when speaking with



members of the public and media. Even with three Public Information Officers (PIOs), the Chief should be the spokesperson for Proposition 1 when interacting with the media and the business community. All quotes in these media releases should be attributed to him. His friendly, personable manner will inspire confidence and bring a small town appeal to such a large district.

David Lawson, the Chief Financial Officer, should be the spokesperson for finance issues and the person quoted in those media releases. Having a special person for financial-related issues shows the public that this topic is a priority for the district and increases taxpayer confidence.

All spokespeople, including the PIOs, should undergo media training every three years. As primary spokespeople for the ballot measure, the Chief and CFO should be trained early this year. It's going to be critical to stay on message when discussing Proposition 1 and define it in terms of maintaining emergency service levels. The spokesperson needs to be able to bring all questions back around to the key messages in this document as opposed to defending details that might confuse the public. Media training usually is offered through professional associations or conferences, but a private trainer can be procured.

### C. Speakers Bureau and PowerPoint Presentation

Staff should make a formal presentation at various service clubs and community organizations through a Speakers Bureau. A media release is designed to be sent at the beginning of the year to let the public know that speakers are available.

When it comes to the business community, contact them directly and schedule times to speak. This group will be impacted the most by Proposition 1, and SKF&R should plan to spend a significant amount of time answering their questions.

A 15 to 20 minute PowerPoint should be developed with pictures of key demographic groups to whom the district is trying to appeal. Slide information should cover the key messages and might follow this outline:

- Introduce speaker and thank audience for invitation
- Thank them for their past support
  - Explain how their support maintains average response times of four to six minutes, personnel trained in the latest life-saving techniques and equipment, etc.



- Provide details about SKF&R, such as size, population, number of stations, level of care
  - Show map of district and where stations are located
- Provide visual statistics on calls for fire versus emergency medical care
- Provide a brief synopsis of community programs offered
- Explain the top priority is to provide fast, professional fire and emergency medical service
  - Repeat response times, training for personnel, equipment and apparatus
  - Let the audience know that SKF&R makes cuts when needed provided public safety isn't compromised
- Let them know that being good stewards of your tax dollars is important, too
  - List examples of budget cuts and savings
  - Mention SKF&R operates under a balanced budget and has passed all financial audits
- Explain how economy is hurting fire district's ability to maintain emergency service levels
  - Explain funding sources
  - Show how cuts and reserves are not enough
    - Explain need for healthy reserves for equipment replacement, etc.
  - Graph instability of current revenue stream when compared to current service level costs
    - Show how some costs even increase – like health care and labor contracts
  - Show forecasted deficit after 2010
- List proposed cuts to make up \$3.5 million deficit if funding can't be stabilized
  - Explain in detail how cuts will impact response times, layoffs during tough economy and possibly insurance rates for businesses because of jeopardizing Class 2 rating
- Mention that SKF&R is considering different funding options to maintain emergency service levels
  - More details will be forthcoming
- Thank your audience again and ask for questions
- Leave behind printed information, i.e. a newsletter or Welcome to South King Fire and Rescue brochure.



After the Board of Commissioners passes its resolution, add the following slides:

- Introduce Proposition 1 and make the following points in only two slides:
  - Similar to levy lid lifts that the public has supported in the past
    - Maintains response times and staffing levels for emergency care
    - Needs 60 percent to pass and lasts for six years
  - Explain how it works
    - Reduces property taxes by amount of revenue collected
      - Show examples of OAVs from neighboring fire districts before and after passing a similar measure
    - Calculated on square footage of property
    - Rate set through a series of public meetings
      - Improves accountability to taxpayers through public meeting process
    - Exemptions and credits for sprinklers, assisted living facilities
    - Maintains Class 2 rating, which could mean lower insurance rates for businesses
      - Important in this economy!
- Thank your audience again and ask for questions
- Leave behind printed information, i.e. a newsletter or Financial Update for community service clubs; FAQs for seniors and business groups
  - Refer those who are interested in more information to the district web site

#### D. Social Media

Younger residents are some of SKF&R's strongest supporters and need to be reached through their communication media. In this case, social media sites are very important. In fact, 31 percent of men under 45 – a key demographic for the district – said social media is the best way to communicate with them.



Current social media sites could be considered a more modern version of SKF&R's automated safety call program. It is a more proactive way of reaching out to deliver specific information as opposed to the passivity of trying to drive people to a web site.

SKF&R should establish a presence on Facebook and Twitter as another venue to tell its story. It could be used to notify residents when new materials are released like newsletters, the Chief's DVD and the Financial Update brochure. Information should be occasional, timely and relevant. Too many Facebook updates or Tweets and residents will tune out.

Encourage residents to sign up through the newsletter, on the web site and through a media release. This should be an official function of the district. Please remember - do not to use either communication method to inform taxpayers about ballots dropping, election deadlines, etc. Those are considered campaign-related issues and are not allowed by state law.

## E. Public Outreach

### 1. Community Events

SKF&R has a list of community events at which it makes regular public appearances. Look for additional events that target key demographic groups, such as Farmers' Markets (ages 35-59), and public sporting events (Men) for example. Have information ready to distribute to the public, such as extra newsletters and the Financial Update card. Depending on the public function, it might be beneficial to have the Fire District Update DVD running in the background for people to watch if power outlets are available. Citizen Advisory Team members could help staff these events and distribute information.

### 2. Ethnic Groups

SKF&R should make a special effort to outreach to ethnic groups in its service territory. Many are small business owners, as well as frequent voters. In close elections, it is often these voters that matter the most. For information purposes, the largest groups are:



<b>Group</b>	<b># of registered voters in District</b>
Hispanic	3,495
Jewish	1,992
Russian or former Soviet States	1,513
Korean	1,413
Chinese	1,023

All materials that SKF&R creates should be translated and distributed through places of worship and ethnic community centers. When looking for translation assistance, contact those facilities and ask for volunteers. This is a great way to get insular groups involved in the fire district that provides their emergency services. Outreach efforts will be much appreciated and remembered.

### 3. Public Meetings

To outreach to members of the public who aren't involved in service clubs, SKF&R should hold a series of public meetings two weeks before the election at different fire stations. Use the PowerPoint presentation and make sure to provide refreshments. Stagger the meeting times, i.e. hold a few in the evening, some midday for stay-at-home moms and seniors, and some on the weekends. Have a CAT member collect contact information for those who attend, including phone numbers and email addresses.

Oftentimes public meetings are not well attended. Don't worry about numbers. The point is to be as accessible and available as possible for taxpayers who have questions about Proposition 1.



## VI. TIMELINE

The final part of this Strategic Communications Plan is a timeline for implementation. A timeline acts as an informal “To Do” list as SKF&R approaches Primary Election Day. Shaded areas indicate the month in which the communication activity, program or event should happen. Specific drop dates for mailings are indicated where appropriate. Be sure to plan preparation time in advance to meet deadlines for accomplishing these projects.

Method/Month	Details	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Paid Communications	Newsletter		End of Feb			Early May		Jul 30th	
	On-Hold Message System								
	Welcome to South King Fire & Rescue	Include all new residents for past 12 months						2nd week of Jul	
	Financial Update								Aug 5th
	FAQs								
	Fire District Update DVD								
	Web Site	Initial message on home page				Updated message on home page		Materials and information	Materials and information
Earned Media	Media List								
	Media Releases								
	Spokesperson Training								
Speakers Bureau & PowerPoint		Initial message				Updated message			
Social Media	Facebook & Twitter								
Public Outreach	Community Events								
	Ethnic Groups								
	Public Meetings								Aug 1st through 15th