

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:**

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BC South Fire Protection District

### **BC South and Ketchum Fire Districts Advance Long-Awaited Consolidation Plan with Upcoming Board Votes**

Hailey, ID – After more than 35 years of discussion on enhancing fire and emergency services across Blaine County, the BC South Fire Protection District and Ketchum Fire Protection District are taking decisive action toward consolidation. As Fire Chief of the BC South Fire Protection District, I am proud to announce that our administrations have developed a comprehensive consolidation plan, which will be presented for symbolic adoption at upcoming board meetings on October 15 and 16.

This plan represents a collaborative effort to create the Blaine County Fire & Rescue, uniting our resources to deliver more efficient, reliable, and advanced public safety services to our growing communities. A draft of the plan was shared with both Boards of Fire Commissioners during their September meetings, incorporating valuable feedback from commissioners to refine our approach.

The BC South Board of Fire Commissioners will convene at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, October 15, at BC South Station 3, 11053 Highway 75, Bellevue. The Ketchum Board of Fire Commissioners will meet at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, at the Ketchum Fire Station, 107 Saddle Road, Ketchum. These meetings are open to the public, and community input is warmly welcomed as we move forward.

The October votes serve as a symbolic gesture of commitment, approving the plan and initiating its four phases. Upon approval by both boards, a joint resolution will authorize our departments to proceed—not as a final consolidation, but as a good-faith step toward full integration by January 2027. This process will adhere strictly to Idaho state requirements, ensuring transparency, public feedback opportunities, equitable tax levy establishment, and a culminating consolidation resolution.

Immediate next steps include forming a steering committee, launching monthly commissioner oversight meetings, conducting budget analyses, and aligning departmental operations. For full transparency, updates on the plan and progress will be posted on the BC South and Ketchum districts' websites, as well as the new [blainecountyfire.com](http://blainecountyfire.com).

As the two primary agencies contracting with the Blaine County Ambulance District for countywide ambulance services, our consolidation will streamline operations, enabling all transporting ambulances to operate under a single, unified entity. This will address surging demands: Call volumes in our district have risen nearly 160% over the past five years and are projected to climb further into 2026, driven by population growth, construction, and tourism.

The core goals of this consolidation are clear—efficiency and elevated service levels. By eliminating redundancies in staff, technology, and equipment, we will establish a balanced tax levy that delivers fair value to all participating communities. Enhanced staffing across the district, optimized deployment of resources like backcountry rescue, auto extrication, and ambulances, and expanded training opportunities will bring us closer to national benchmarks from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). Ultimately, this will bolster firefighter safety through unified command, standardized policies, and stronger team cohesion.

In BC South, we currently staff a minimum of two ambulance crews 24/7, yet 20% of calls involve two simultaneous incidents, and 10% require three—often relying on paid-on-call personnel who must respond from home, delaying critical response times when every minute matters. Over the past decade, multiple consultants have unanimously recommended countywide consolidation of fire and EMS resources to meet these escalating needs. Building on the successful merger of the Wood River and West Magic districts that formed BC South, our partnership with Ketchum covers a significant portion of the county and sets the stage for broader collaboration.

We are committed to a fully transparent process. Board meetings are public forums, and we encourage residents to attend, share comments, and engage. This is your public safety system, supported by your tax dollars, and our aim is to maximize value while enhancing protection for Blaine County families, businesses, and visitors. While the full advantages of consolidation shine brightest with countywide participation—no agency is obligated to join—we invite all partners to join us in building a stronger, more resilient district.

For more details on the plan or to provide input, please visit [blainecountyfire.com](http://blainecountyfire.com) or contact our office.

### **About BC South Fire Protection District**

The BC South Fire Protection District proudly serves the communities of Bellevue, Hailey, and surrounding areas in Blaine County, Idaho, with dedicated fire suppression, emergency medical services, and rescue operations. Committed to excellence and community safety, we partner with local agencies to protect lives and property every day.