

March 2, 2004 Primary Election

Total Yes Votes: 13,822 66.8%

Total No Votes: 6,882 33.2%

**CITY OF VISALIA
MEASURE T**

(Required to Pass: 2/3 votes cast)

VISALIA POLICE, FIRE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY/9-1-1 MEASURE. Shall Visalia voters enact a one-quarter cent sales tax, with citizens advisory committee oversight and independent annual audits, to: improve 9-1-1 police/fire response time; expand programs to reduce gang violence, drug trafficking and graffiti; increase number of police officers/firefighters; build neighborhood police/fire stations and firefighter training center; improve hazardous material/bomb squad response times; repair/upgrade outdated public safety building/emergency 9-1-1 dispatch center?

YES

NO

**IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS BY CITY ATTORNEY
MEASURE T**

Measure T proposes to raise revenue for the purpose of funding police and fire facilities, equipment and personnel, by authorizing a sales tax of one-fourth of a cent within the City of Visalia. The tax would be paid in addition to the current state and local sales taxes and would be collected at the same time and in the same manner as existing sales taxes.

California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7286.44 authorizes the City Council to levy a transaction and use tax (i.e., a "sales") tax at a rate not to exceed 0.25 percent if the tax is approved by two thirds of the qualified voters of the city voting in an election on that issue. If approved by the voters, the sales tax will be adopted by ordinance to become effective no sooner than May 1, 2004.

The revenues raised from the sales tax will be used to hire and equip 28 additional police officers and 18 new firefighters. It will provide for opening of two new police precincts and two new fire stations. The revenues will also be used to improve the 911 emergency dispatch center to decrease emergency response time.

The sales tax increases will be subject to certain conditions included in a plan adopted by the City Council. Such conditions provide that the expenditures of money pursuant to the plan be independently audited on an annual basis and that a citizen's advisory committee review the auditor's report and report to the community their findings. The City Manager is required to re-certify the plan of expenditures annually at the time of submittal of the budget to the City Council and every eight years the City Council must reaffirm the need for the public safety sales tax by a four-fifths vote.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE T

Vote Yes on T to improve Visalia's police and fire services and reduce response times to emergency 9-1-1 calls – ensuring the safety of all Visalians.

Visalia's Emergency 9-1-1 calls for help have gone up 7,000 in the last year alone. **Yes on T** will add greatly needed police officers and firefighters to meet Visalia's growing need for police and fire service.

Visalia's 9-1-1 Dispatch Center was built in 1970, and hasn't had significant upgrades in decades. Current police and fire buildings can't accommodate the modern technology needed to fight crime and respond to emergency 9-1-1 calls. **Yes on T** repairs and upgrades these outdated public safety buildings.

Yes on T reduces the time it takes for emergency workers to reach people who need help.

Yes on T adds beat officers to our neighborhoods to reduce gang violence, graffiti and drug trafficking.

Yes on T increases the number of firefighters on call to respond to medical and fire emergencies.

Yes on T establishes two neighborhood fire stations in underserved areas of our city – ensuring that Visalia can handle more than one fire emergency at a time.

Yes on T keeps all funding local – addressing Visalia’s public safety needs only.

Yes on T includes strict financial accountability requirements. An independent Citizens’ Oversight Committee will oversee all funds, and issue annual audits. By law, money can only be spent on the projects promised to voters.

Though Visalia has continued to grow, our police and fire departments have not. **Yes on T** makes necessary upgrades, repairs and improvements now, while it is less expensive. If we wait, these problems will only get worse.

Yes on T protects Visalia from state-wide budget cuts. It is time for Visalians to take control of the future of local police, fire and emergency services. **Vote Yes on T!**

- s/ James M. Chamberlain, Visalia Police Officer’s Association
- s/ Ray Ramirez, Visalia Firefighters Local 3719
- s/ Mary T. Hill, Visalia Banker
- s/ Floyd Westbrook, Visalia Police Chaplain Corps.
- s/ Brian Blain, Business Owner and Farmer

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE T

Measure T would assign to the Fire and Police Department \$4,500,000 in the first year of its operation based on a conservative estimate by the City. In five years it would grow to \$4,800,000, in ten years \$5,300,000, in twenty years \$6,500,000. Sixty percent of this would go to the police department and forty percent to the fire department.

At the present time 50% of the spendable money in the City Budget goes to the police and fire departments. That percentage will increase as the time goes on.

The City now has five fully manned fire crews and has agreements with Tulare and the County fire department to provide aid when needed. A fire two blocks from the Station on Whitendale recently was fought by thirteen fire trucks from the city, Tulare and the County. WE DON'T NEED MORE FIRE STATIONS.

THIS MEASURE WILL GUARANTEE OVER LAPPING AND DUPLICATION OF FIRE PROTECTION. The fire department proposes to build a new station in the northwest part of Visalia. It will "protect" the Industrial area in that portion of the City. The buildings in that Industrial area of the city are already protected by automatic fire sprinklers. Fires in those buildings will be extinguished or controlled before any fire department help arrives. Furthermore the County Fire Station at Goshen will respond to fires in that area and the City Station at the airport which receives less calls than any other station is available.

PROTECT YOUR TAX DOLLARS – VOTE NO ON MEASURE T

s/ Joe Randall, Individual

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE T

We live in a great age. Hundreds of people in Visalia carry cell phones which can be used to report crimes and fires. Methods of extinguishing fires and saving lives and property have been perfected to a high degree. A comparison of these systems with the ancient plans originally developed by Benjamin Franklin is as follows:

Property Loss

Fire Deaths

(Over last 7 years)

¹Visalia \$20,157, 000

Nine Deaths over 11 years

²RCID \$100,000 No deaths over thirty years

The Reedy Creek Improvement District in Florida has 38.4 square miles to protect while Visalia has 28.0 square miles. RCID has two fire stations and is not planning on additional stations. Visalia has four fire stations and is planning on two additional stations in the near future. RCID has 100% of its buildings protected by modern fire extinguishing systems. Visalia has less than 2% of its buildings so protected.

If the Police Department would give the voters of Visalia and opportunity to use their cell phones to report crimes and to back up the department it would be a great advance.

Voting against this proposal of spending millions of dollars for the existing police and fire departments will encourage them to look to modern systems and the cooperation of citizens in controlling crime and fires.

If this proposal is approved the City Council will have no opportunity to use these funds for things that they feel are important for the community. It ties their hands.

I strongly urge voters to turn down this proposal and encourage the fire and police department to use the latest and most modern technics available.

s/ Joe Randall, Retired Fire Protection Engineer

¹ From the records of the Visalia Fire Department

² From personal interviews and the internet

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE T

Should misinformation jeopardize your safety? No!

A YES vote on T improves Visalia's safety. Consider the facts:

FACT: Measure T is a comprehensive public safety plan to improve your safety. This proposal was developed over many months by Visalia community leaders, police officers and firefighters to respond specifically to local public safety needs. Over 1,000 Visalia residents participated in the planning process by identifying priorities.

FACT: In the past year, emergency calls for help increased by 7,000.

To lower response times to emergency calls, and to keep our neighborhoods safe from gang violence and drug trafficking, we must increase the number of police officers and firefighters in our neighborhoods.

FACT: Visalia needs modern systems to respond to crime and fires. Measure T will upgrade the old and outdated public safety building and emergency dispatch 9-1-1 center, which haven't had significant upgrades in over thirty years.

FACT: If we wait to make these improvements, our public safety problems will only get worse. Measure T responds to Visalia's public safety needs NOW, before it is too late.

FACT: Measure T is a fiscally responsible plan, subject to review by an Independent Citizens Committee, annual audits, and additional reviews by the City Council. It can only be extended by a super-majority vote of the Council.

All monies raised by Measure T stay here in Visalia, and can only be spent on your police and fire services.

Together we can make Visalia safe—vote YES on T.

s/ Bob Link, Mayor & Business Owner

s/ Ray Forsyth, Former Police Chief & City Manager

s/ George Sandoval, Fire Chief

s/ Lynne Hare, Accountant

s/ Brian Blain, Business Owner & Farmer