District Manager's Report

monteolsen@tightwadfpd.org
November 19, 2026

Recruitment Public Education Campaign

Based on the impact of the Station K Media produced social media promotions this month's elections, I am recommending the Board consider engaging Station K Media to produce one to two social media promotions a month for the District in an effort to increase recruitment. In conjunction with this recruitment campaign, I also recommend the Board consider purchasing several 18 inch by 24 inch "yard" signs that can be moved around the District with at least one such sign at each fire station.

New Water Line

The District urgently needs to run a line from the new meter into the fire station and then remove the connection to the meter that will now just be for the village hall for the Village of Tightwad. This needs to be a priority to maintain the best relations with the Village (I believe I privately have shared the attorney for the District's advice; if not, Board members please follow up with me).

At the same time the new water line is connected to the new meter, it would be best if a pole is also set near the new meter for a standpipe to fill apparatus.

Financial Review/Audit

The District received an unsolicited request from Colorado-based Dimov Audit to engage them for a financial audit of the District's 2026 finances and while I do not think the Board is interested in engaging a CPA for an audit of the District's 2026 finances, I have asked Dimov Audit to provide additional information about all their auditing services (Dimov Audit is registered with the State of Missouri as a CPA).

I have also followed up again with Oklahoma-based Hood & Associates CPAs, which is the successor organization to Trout Beeman and Associates in Harrisonville who conducted the District's 2018, 2019, and 2020 financial audits and I have been promised that someone from their audit team will be in contact with me in the near future.

Accounting Software

CPA Melissa Schroder has informed the District that she is choosing to narrow the focus of Melissa's Advisory Service (MAS) to just her agricultural clients effective December 1, 2026, and therefore the District will need to transition its QuickBooks Plus subscription from MAS to QuickBooks or another QuickBooks ProAdvisor (MAS is a QuickBooks ProAdvisor).

As a QuickBooks ProAdvisor, MAS was able to get a 30% discount for its clients; however, Intuit Software, which owns QuickBooks, confirmed that the District is unable to transfer its subscription to another QuickBooks ProAdvisor and retain the 30% discount (with the 30% discount, the District is now paying $102.90/month for QuickBooks Plus).

The only option to get the 30% discount is to start over in QuickBooks with another QuickBooks Advisor; however, the District would have to start without any historical information in the new QuickBooks subscription and there is not a way to import the data from the previous subscription into the new subscription. I also confirmed this with two different QuickBooks ProAdvisors.

There are competitors to QuickBooks, but I was cautioned by two different CPA firms that if they were not familiar with what competing QuickBooks product the District switched to, then audit costs may go up because the auditors are not familiar with that particular product.

Another district I worked with used Xero which had similarities to QuickBooks and costs $97/month for the equivalent Mid-Tier 2 subscription, but I had extreme difficulties with their customer service—even after I tried visit their offices in Denver! Other competitors are Oracle NetSuite, BooksGPT, Sage Intacct, FreshBooks, etc.; however, some of them do not have all the features of QuickBooks Plus and some are too complicated or expensive for what the District needs.

Intuit Software does have a Black Friday sale right now that would give the District 70% off for three months, which would give more time to evaluate alternatives to QuickBooks. The District could also switch to annual pre-billing and save 18%--with an option to request a refund if the District cancels its subscription during the year.

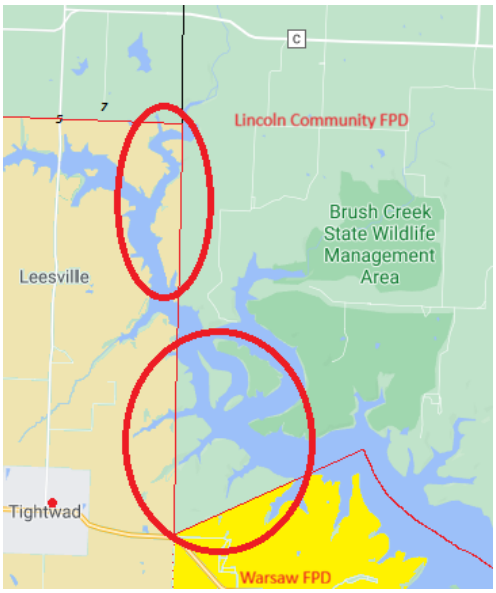
Intuit Software is supposed to call me back tomorrow at Noon to let me know if the States of Minnesota (Sourcewell) or Missouri have any subscription discounts.

My recommendation at the moment is to switch the billing to Intuit Software taking advantage of the Black Friday 70% off for three months. And then by the end of February, if not sooner depending on state bid discounts, make a decision on staying with QuickBooks Plus and saving 18% by pre-billing or switch to a different accounting application.

<u>New Webpage on How to Expand District Boundaries</u>

The District has a new webpage (www.tightwadfpd.org/expansion) that explains the process for the District to expand it's borders by a petition process that would not require an election if 100% of the voters (not landowners) petitioned their land adjacent to the District to be included in the District or if at least 25% of the voters in an area adjacent to the District petition, a majority vote would be required of all the voters in that area. The District cannot expand its boundaries into the Warsaw or Lincoln Community Fire Protection District without a joint petition to the Court from the Warsaw or Lincoln Community Fire Protection District.

There is some merit to swapping with the Lincoln Community Fire Protection District some US Conservation land in the District on the east side of the Tebo Arm of Truman Lake with US Conservation land in Benton County on the west side of the Tebo Arm of Truman Lake—neither District can reach their territory on the "wrong side" of Tebo Arm.



Missouri's Rural Health Transformation Program

There is no update yet on the needs survey that just ended that was conducted by an ad hoc committee of the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) for requesting emergency medical responder (EMR) classes throughout the state in each of the 104 rural counties served by the RHTP. The EMR needs survey attracted 57 responses out of about 660 survey requests sent out, which at an 8.6% response rate is about average for an external survey.

Website Hosting Platform and Cloud Storage Platform

I mentioned in the last report that the District will need to address the removal or conversion of existing portable data files (PDFs) on the website so that the PDFs meet the Federal accessibility requirements that will go into effect in April 2027; however, at a presentation I saw both online and during last week's Missouri Special District Association's Governance, Education, and Resources summit in Kansas City, those accessibility requirements go into effect in April 2027 only for local governments serving a population greater than 50,000. The accessibility requirements go into effect for ALL local governments in April 2028—so the District has bought some additional time to resolve the accessibility issues with the PDFs on its website.

FirstNet Wireless Telephone and Internet Services

A recap from previous months' reports…

FirstNet is a nationwide, high-speed wireless broadband network dedicated exclusively to America's first responders and public safety community. Unlike regular wireless phone service, FirstNet keeps emergency workers connected when everyday commercial networks get jammed or slow down during a disaster.

FirstNet is currently offering through the State of Missouri's Cooperative Purchasing Program an iPhone 17e 256gb wireless telephone device for 99 cents or a Samsung S25RE 128gb wireless telephone device for 99 cents and both with unlimited talk, text, and data for $39.99 per month, which is about what the District is paying for its existing telephone service. The District's current telephone number can be ported to the FirstNet Service. While FirstNet does not offer the District any savings, it does add an additional telephone to the FirstNet network, which could be strategically important during a disaster. Plus, it is a nice phone for a buck.

FirstNet also provides wireless internet services through a M4 Pro hotspot device for $38 per month on a three-year agreement, which is a $515.40 in annual savings versus the District's current wired internet service from Conexon for $80.95 per month.

However, as previously stated, my only concern is the quality of wireless internet service from FirstNet versus wired internet service from Conexion; however, the Pricing Sheet provided by FirstNet states "30 day trial for service", which means if the wireless internet service is too inferior compared to wired internet service, the FirstNet wireless internet service can be discontinued.

Also note that the telephone service is available with hot spot internet for an additional $5/month, which is still a $3.20 savings per month versus the current charges from Straight Talk Wireless.

I recommend the Board approves switching the telephone service to FirstNet with a hot spot because #1) higher likelihood of telephone and internet service during community emergencies; #2) the District will receive a new smartphone for 99 cents; and #3) there will be a slight savings.

I also recommend the Board approve experimenting with FirstNet's wireless internet service for 30 days because #1) higher likelihood of internet service during community emergencies; #2) a mobile hotspot device that can be taken from the station to the scene, meetings at the church, etc.; and #3) significant savings of $42.95/month if the service is at least equal to the current wired internet service (that's an annualized savings of $515.40).

Privacy Education of Personnel and Board

Confidentiality and privacy training for Operations personnel will be scheduled for an upcoming training session.

Employee Onboarding Education and Training and Employee Conduct Forms

Employees also still need to receive drug awareness education and training with the confidentiality and privacy training, including education on alcohol and substance use. Every employee needs to have on file a signed acknowledgment of the District's Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy, including consent to test as described in the Policy.

Bookkeeping Services

A recap from previous reports…

I recommend the District approve using the James Tax Service to provide bookkeeping services to the District while Mae continues to catch up on reconciliation of the P-cards as well as uploading attachments into QuickBooks for previous transactions.

The bookkeeping services will consist of data entry of deposits, invoices/bills, checks, reconciliation, and financial reporting as well as support of budget creation.

No one from the James Tax Services will be able to sign District checks. Mae will provide the scanned documents to James Tax Service for data entry, reconciliation, etc.

Here is a table to illustrate the before and engagement of the James Tax Service:

	Now		**After**	
Tasks	**Mae**		**Mae**	**Kassy**
Check signing	X		X	
Scanning documents	X		X	
Data entry of deposits, invoices/bills, checks	X			X
Uploading scanned documents	X			X
Reconciliation of checking account	X			X
Reconciliation of P-cards until Mae catches up	X		X	
Reconciliation of P-cards once Mae catches up				X
Monthly reporting	X			X
Budget support	X			X

School Cardiac Emergency Response Planning

There is no update on the Leesville School District Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in which the Tightwad Fire Protection District could be engaged to support the School District in purchasing AEDs, training on CPR and AED use, planning and practicing drills, and ensuring the School District has a routine check and maintenance schedule for their AED equipment and supplies.

Updated Medical Protocols

I have not yet received updated medical protocols from the Golden Valley Memorial Healthcare EMS Director.