

# Santa Fe County voters OK bonds, fire tax

By Tom Sharpe | The New Mexican

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Santa Fe County voters overwhelmingly voted in favor of extending the county fire excise tax of one-quarter of 1 percent, and approved three general obligation bonds that will raise a total of \$28 million.

Unofficial tallies late Tuesday had the fire tax winning with support of about 70 percent of votes cast.

The quarter-cent tax on gross receipts in Santa Fe County will finance operational expenses, ambulance services and capital outlay costs of independent fire districts and ambulance services provided by the county.

County Bond Question 1 also was passing, with 70 percent of the voters agreeing to authorize \$19 million in general obligation bonds, backed by property taxes, to acquire, build, design, equip and improve roads in the county.

County Bond Question 2 was passing with 71 percent support for authorizing \$10 million in general obligation bonds to acquire real estate and water rights, and to construct, design, equip, rehabilitate and improve water and wastewater projects.

County Bond Question 3 was passing with about 65.5 percent of voters agreeing to authorize \$6 million in general obligation bonds to acquire, design, construct, improve, equip and restore open spaces, trails and parks.

None of these measures is expected to result in a tax increase; instead, the measures will hold rates at current levels.

In addition to the local measures, Santa Fe County voters went along with voters statewide in approving three state bond issues, raising more than \$141 million for senior citizens facilities, libraries and institutions of higher learning.

Bond A, expected to raise \$10.3 million for senior citizens facilities, including \$1.2 million in Santa Fe County, was drawing support from 66.5 percent of voters in Santa Fe County.

Bond B, raising \$9.8 million for libraries, including \$1.3 million in Santa Fe County, was passing locally with 67 percent of the vote.

Bond C, raising \$120 million for higher education and special schools, including \$1 million in Santa Fe County, was passing locally with about 66 percent of the vote.

# Santa Fe Voters Approve Bonds, Fire Tax

By [Kiera Hay / Journal North Reporter](#) on Tue, Nov 6, 2012

County voters were in a bounteous mood on Tuesday, decisively approving three bonds proposals worth a cumulative \$35 million. Rural residents also approved a quarter-cent gross receipts tax increase to fund capital fire needs.

“I am particularly pleased because a lot of that bond is going to be for services that go directly back to the community, that affect the larger community,” County Commissioner Virginia Vigil said.

The bonds will provide \$19 million for roads, \$10 million for water and wastewater projects and \$6 million for open space, parks and trails. The proposals were unofficially approved with more than two-thirds of the vote.

The fire tax increase — about 25 cents on a \$100 purchase — is expected to generate about \$1.24 million annually. The tax will only apply to sales by businesses located in county areas outside the incorporated municipalities of Santa Fe, Española and Edgewood.

Tax revenue will be used for fire equipment vehicles, buildings, gear and similar items. State law mandates it cannot be used for salaries or benefits.

About two-thirds voters green-lighted the tax. It was a far cry from three years ago, when voters soundly rejected the tax increase in a special election.

“I’m very appreciative of the majority of Santa Fe County voters who appear to recognize the value of the Santa Fe County Fire Department and are willing to raise taxes to further support our operations,” County Fire Chief David Sperling said.

Vigil noted that there wasn’t any strong opposition to the bonds this year, something she attributed to the county’s efforts to educate people about the proposals and quick response to questions and inquiries.