

# Special Library District FAQs

**Q. What is a Special District?**

Think fire district and you have the idea. Like a fire district, a library special district has its own elected board, manager and citizen's budget committee. The special library district will include unincorporated areas of the county. City councils in the incorporated areas must consent before they can be included within the boundaries of the proposed district. If approved by their city, residents of the incorporated areas will have the opportunity to vote on the district measure. This is nothing new; there are over 20 special library districts in Oregon counties, which were funded through voter-approved tax rates.

**Q. Who will govern the Special Library District?**

Under Oregon Law, a special district is governed by a board elected at the time the district measure is passed. The County cannot be the governing body of a Special Library District. A special library board is entirely independent of governance by the County Board of Commissioners.

**Q. What will the district cost and what can we expect?**

The Board of Commissioners is recommending a funding rate that will give the district the ability to function and offers the new board and its citizens' budget committee enough for the future. The recommended rate of up to .60/\$1,000 is a ceiling – not a floor. How much will be levied and what the service level will look like is to be determined by the library district board. The proposed rate would likely be enough to maintain or even enhance current services. The district board has the option of not levying the entire amount. It is important to note that County Commissioners and representatives can't guarantee an exact level of service because it will be determined by the District's elected officials and district boundaries. And, the rate will never be higher than this amount.

**Q. Can these funds approved by voters under this ballot measure be used for any other purpose?**

No, these funds are dedicated to library use and can only be used for library service within the district boundary.

**Q. Did the County run out of money to fund the library because they built new libraries?**

No. Similar to financing the building of a house, it doesn't finance the operation of it. The libraries would still be facing closure even if the new buildings had not been built. The library bond that voters approved in May 2000 could only be used to build, not to operate the libraries and furthermore, they cannot be used for anything other than a library until the year 2020. The economy has changed dramatically from 2000 and the county collects far fewer taxes and no longer receives federal timber receipt money.

**Q. What happens if a city council votes to not participate?**

The citizens of the city will not be allowed to participate in the county-wide vote for the library district. They will have no say in how the funds are expended, nor will they have representation on the District's elected board. Further, the future of libraries outside the district will be uncertain as they will still be under the governance of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and will compete with other county services and requirements for funding.

**Q. If my city opts not to participate in the district, will I be able to use other libraries in the county free of charge?**

We cannot assume that the district board will automatically allow non-resident use for free.

**Q. Is it true that the Library is closing; if so when?**

Based on the Budget Committee's decision this budget year, the satellite branch libraries in Jackson County are scheduled to close on June 30, 2014, if stable funding is not secured. Satellite branches include Applegate, Ashland, Butte Falls, Central Point, Eagle Point, Gold Hill, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Prospect, Rogue River, Ruch, Shady Cove, Talent and White City. If stable funding isn't secured by June 30, 2015 then the Medford Branch Library is scheduled to close.