

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Voters within the Madrid Rural Fire District will be asked for support in continuing the district's taxing authority for another five-year period.

"That tax has been two mills for the past four and one half years for the support of the fire department," said Al Proctor, member of the Madrid Rural Fire District. "It is the board's expectation that the rate will not be exceeded in the coming five years."

Proctor points out that the fire district does not receive any tax or other financial support from Perkins County or any other source.

For their money, the taxpayers of the Madrid Rural Fire District have received a major overhaul of the fire department during the last four and one half years, said Proctor.

The board has provided for the department two new "brush trucks" for fighting field fires, a four wheel drive Suburban for transporting Emergency Medical Technicians to the scene of medical emergencies, a generator powered light tower to assist in fighting fires at night, and an eight wheel drive two thousand plus gallon water tanker to haul the necessary water to both field and structural fires.

The water tanker is a very unique piece of equipment, he said. It was recently in service during the range fires in Keith and Perkins Counties, providing water supply. The tanker was acquired as a surplus piece of equipment from the Nebraska Forest Service. A unique feature of the tanker to pull behind fire trucks and reload their water supply while they're actively fighting a fire.

Numerous smaller items of equipment such as breathing devices for the firemen, pagers and other safety equipment have also been purchased by the department.

Training in firefighting and emergency medical procedures has also been a priority item, said Proctor.

"The Madrid Rural Fire District has used the taxpayers' money wisely to provide the best possible firefighting service to the residents of the Madrid District," said Proctor. "The job is not done, however, because the work for a fireman and a fire department requires regular repair and replacement of both large and small equipment."

Proctor said thankfully the equipment is not used frequently, but when it is used the use is very hard on the equipment as well as the brave men and women who volunteer to protect the Madrid Fire District.

Proctor said the board is hoping voters support the continuation of the taxing authority in next week's election.