

Questions and Answers on Sandoval County's 2014 General Obligation Bonds

Q: What exactly will these bonds pay for?

A: There are four bond questions on the ballot. They are listed as follows:

- **Bond A** would raise \$7,000,000 to fund a consolidated public safety center, housing headquarters for the County Sheriff's Department and the County Fire Department.
- **Bond B** would generate \$2,000,000 to upgrade equipment that supports the 911 emergency communications system that supports all communities throughout the county.
- **Bond C** would raise \$8,000,000 to expand the Sandoval County Judicial Complex to alleviate overcrowding that has resulted from the increasing caseload that has accompanied the county's population growth.
- **Bond D** would generate \$2,300,000 to purchase new books, equipment and building expansions for the Sandoval County Library System.

Q: Why do we need these facilities now?

A: Sandoval County's population exploded between the years 2000 and 2012, going from 89,800 to 131,561. That means facilities that were built to accommodate that smaller population are now busting at the seams.

While the population boom may have subsided, the county is still adding people at rate of 3% to 4% each year. That means the strain on current facilities is only going to increase. It's also safe to assume that the cost for the projects will increase as time goes on. So starting them now is likely to save money in the long run.

Q: Isn't the County Courthouse new? Why does it need expanding already?

A: The County Courthouse opened in 2005, with three District Court Judges, the District Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Department all moving in. However, it wasn't long before the growing District Court caseloads started putting a strain on the facility.

More cases meant more court personnel needed to be hired, and they required office space. County officials have taken some steps to alleviate the space crunch. For instance, the District Attorney's Office has been moved to an older county-owned building in downtown Bernalillo. This year, however, the county's continued population growth prompted the State Legislature to add a fourth judge to the county's District Court, and there is no room in the current courthouse for that judge.

Also, when looking at future population projections, there is reason to expect additional judges will be needed before long. In fact, most projections have the county's population reaching 217,000 by 2035. That's equal to the current population of Doña Ana County, which has eight District Court judges. The plan is to use funds from this bond issue to make the courthouse large enough to accommodate that growth.

Q: Why do the Sheriff's and Fire Departments need a consolidated headquarters?

A: The Sheriff's Department needs to move its headquarters out of the courthouse for two reasons:

- There's not enough available space in the building to house all of the department's command staff.
- The space the Sheriff's staff is occupying is needed for the expansion of court facilities.

The Fire Department's headquarters currently is in an old building that also is too small to house its entire command staff.

So, putting these two departments in a new facility would make them both more efficient by allowing all of the command personnel to operate from a single location.

Having the two departments in the same building also would make it easier for them to collaborate in situations that require response from both departments, such as major car crashes, wildfires, and other emergencies.

Q: What is all of this going to cost the average Sandoval County property owner?

A: If all four bond issues pass, including the one for the libraries, taxes would increase roughly \$44.04 per year—which breaks down to \$3.67 per month—on a home valued at \$183,400, which is the average home value in Sandoval County. Of course, the amount for each individual taxpayer could be higher or lower, based on the actual value of their home.