

KITTCOM 911

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2024 Sales Tax Measure

KITTCOM is asking voters for a sales tax increase in the April special election to improve the countywide 911 communications system and public safety.



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Why are we asking for this?

KITTCOM answers and coordinates 911 services for all 17 public safety agencies in Kittitas County, including fire, emergency medical service (EMS), police, and search-and-rescue. Our emergency radio system and communications infrastructure are outdated and unreliable in many parts of the county. This poses significant challenges for first responders and search teams to coordinate and communicate during emergencies. “Radio holes” or “dead zones” in many locations in the county impact response times, patient care, wildland fire suppression, and rescue operations. This public safety issue affects the entire county and a sustainable funding source is needed to pay for critical improvements.



What will be on the ballot?

We are asking voters for a two-tenths of 1 percent sales tax increase (two cents on every \$10 purchase) on the April 23, 2024, special election ballot.

What will the sales tax fund?

Radio equipment, communication towers, technology improvements, security and other critical infrastructure, and maintenance costs.

Why a sales tax?*

Visitors and people traveling through the county should also contribute to the 911 system that we all rely on. KITTCOM serves nearly 50,000 residents plus thousands more who come to recreate or attend festivals. Seasonal and weekend visitors can triple and, at times, quadruple the population in some areas. Approximately 33,000 vehicles pass through Kittitas County every day on Interstate 90 for food, fuel, and lodging. More people living in and visiting the county are straining the outdated and aging 911 system. The small sales tax is a sustainable funding source and would apply to visitors and people coming to recreate or passing through.

Where can I find more information?

Learn more at www.kittcom.org. KITTCOM Interim Director Rich Elliott welcomes your questions at 509-925-8530 or fundingquestions@kittcom.org.

**We currently fund the 911 system through a cell phone fee and user agency fees paid for through local property taxes. In the last three years, user agency fees increased by 50 percent. When local user agencies pay more in fees, it reduces the amount of revenue they have for their daily operations to pay for the emergency personnel, equipment, ambulances, and fire engines all residents require. This funding source is not sustainable for the 911 system or user agencies.*

Is a sales tax a fair and sustainable funding source for 911 services?

Yes. The proposed sales tax of two cents on every \$10 purchase would also apply to visitors and people coming to Kittitas County to recreate or pass through.

In 2022, visitor spending in Kittitas County totaled \$311 million. This spending included recreational supplies, food and beverage, gas, car rentals and bus fares, and retail sales. Hotel stays through June 2023 totaled 258,125 rooms rented – 80 percent of hotel guests are visitors.

More people living in and visiting the county are straining the outdated and aging 911 system. Through a sales tax, visitors and non-residents would contribute to the 911 system that we all rely on.