



**SOUTH MADISON COUNTY
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
(GLUCKSTADT FIRE DEPARTMENT)
639 YANDELL RD * GLUCKSTADT, MS 39046
Phone (601)691-4595
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June 1, 2026

Greg Higginbotham and the Madison County Board of Supervisors
146 W. Center Street
Canton, MS 39046

Dear Mr. Higginbotham and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the South Madison County Fire Protection District (SMCFPD), I respectfully request the continued support of the Madison County Board of Supervisors and consideration of additional funding to help us maintain and enhance the level of fire and emergency services provided to the citizens and businesses within our district.

The South Madison County Fire Protection District has had a long and productive partnership with the Madison County Board of Supervisors. Many of the accomplishments achieved by our district over the past two decades would not have been possible without the support and investment of the Madison County Board of Supervisors. We are grateful for that partnership and the confidence you have in our organization.

The mission of SMCFPD is to provide the highest level of fire protection and emergency response services possible, both within our legally established district boundaries and in those areas where we contract with Madison County to provide services. Through strategic planning, infrastructure improvements, personnel development, and operational enhancements, we have significantly improved fire protection capabilities and lowered insurance costs for residents and businesses throughout the district.

A History of Strategic Excellence

Following a 2007 Mississippi State Rating Bureau (MSRB) evaluation that placed the district at a Class 9 rating, the SMCFPD Board of Commissioners and the Madison County Board of Supervisors initiated a series of strategic milestones to systematically upgrade our capabilities. This began in 2008 with the hiring of twelve trained firefighters to secure daytime staffing at Station 1. By December 2011, the construction of Station 2 on Stribling Road enabled 24-hour coverage in the growing southern region, alongside the renovation of Station 1 for continuous operations. This initial wave of improvements, including the addition of a Class A pumper, successfully lowered our insurance classification to a Class 8 in 2011 and a Class 7 in 2013. The expansion continued into 2018 with the opening of Station 3, which extended services to the Twin Harbor area, increased shift staffing from two to three firefighters per station and earned the district a Class 6 rating. Adopting the 2018 Fire Codes propelled the district to a Class 5 rating in 2020. Most recently, through district-funded investments in personnel and the acquisition of three new engines and a ladder truck, the SMCFPD

achieved a Class 4 insurance rating effective July 22, 2024. Today, according to the MSRB, the SMCFPD is the best-rated fire protection district in the State of Mississippi.

Meeting the Demands of Regional Growth

While we are proud of these accomplishments, rapid residential and commercial growth throughout southern Madison County has significantly expanded our service area and increased the volume of calls for service. Today, our department responds to approximately 2,000 emergency calls each year, and demand continues to grow alongside the community. As call volume rises, maintaining adequate staffing levels is essential to preserving the highest level of emergency response our community expects and deserves. Unfortunately, firefighter salaries within our department remain substantially below those offered by surrounding municipalities. As a result, we regularly lose experienced personnel to neighboring departments that can provide more competitive compensation. This ongoing turnover creates staffing challenges, increases training costs, and impacts on our ability to maintain operational readiness. To stabilize our workforce, remain competitive in recruiting and retaining qualified firefighters, and address an estimated \$600,000 funding gap needed for critical salary adjustments, additional annual revenue is necessary.

Preserving Our Premier Services

Our long-standing district and County partnership has successfully built and sustained one of the finest, highest-performing fire departments in Madison County. We fully understand and respect the Board's strong desire to avoid increasing taxes on our citizens. However, to continue providing the exceptional level of fire and emergency services that our residents currently enjoy and deserve, an increase in funding is necessary. This additional revenue is vital to pay our dedicated fire personnel the competitive wages required to stabilize our workforce.

Accordingly, the South Madison County Fire Protection District respectfully requests that the Madison County Board of Supervisors consider levying an additional two (2) mills in support of the district, increasing the current levy from ten (10) mills to twelve (12) mills. This funding will help ensure the district can maintain competitive staffing levels, preserve its Class 4 insurance rating, and continue providing municipal-level fire protection services despite operating without the broader revenue sources available to municipalities, such as sales tax collections and taxation across all classes of property.

We appreciate your continued support and consideration of this request. We remain committed to providing the highest level of fire protection and emergency services to the citizens and businesses of South Madison County.

Respectfully submitted,

Eddie Price



Chairman, Board of Commissioners
South Madison County Fire Protection District