



Duette Fire and Rescue District

35800 SR 62 E, Duette Florida 34219
Rocky Parker, Fire Chief
941-776-9900

Dear property owner,

This is to inform you that your fire assessment may have changed on your 2023 Trim notices.

In October of 2021 Florida House Bill 1103 The Special District Accountability became Florida Statute 189.0695 requiring all special districts in the State of Florida to undergo a performance audit review and the Duette Fire and Rescue District was no exception. The audit examines revenues and cost of programs, the efficiency of those programs, examines performance measures in the organization and whether we are meeting the statutory purpose of the special district.

This required us to preform an audit of the Duette Fire and Rescue District fire assessment role provided by the Manatee County Property Appraisers Office which was found to have many incorrect assessments and inconsistencies that had to be corrected and made fair across the board moving forward in 2023. All the incorrect assessments favored the property owners where for years many of you have enjoyed paying as little as \$13 dollars for residential structures on acreage, while your neighbor next door was paying as much as \$400 dollars or more as an example. There have been no other rate adjustments since 2010. This is not fair to those that are paying the proper assessment approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Duette Fire and Rescue District, nor can the district ignore an improper assessment favoring one over another.

The fire assessment is based on the total square footage under roof and total acreage as provided by the Manatee County Property Appraisers website, not just the living or business space. The assessment also does not consider when the structure is occupied, it is simply based on the existence of the structure. A copy of The Duette Fire and Rescue District assessment rates approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners, is available online for review. In *Scott Morris v. City of Cape Coral*, the Florida supreme court upheld the fire assessment methodology for counties, municipalities, and special districts alike. It is our requirement by law to account for funds and to make sure the assessment is applied correctly and fairly to all.

The Duette Fire and Rescue District also wants to inform you that we are currently working on providing paramedic services in the very near future. Ambulances take as long as 30 to 45 minutes to arrive in Duette and there is no greater service we can provide than to offer paramedic non-transport services to our residence and businesses. By law we are required to inform you that a percentage of the fire assessment will be applied to paramedic services in the 2023-24 budget available for review online. Our charter allows for Advanced Life Support services because it is titled Fire and Rescue whereas our neighboring districts are only titled Fire District.

Sincerely,

Commission Chair Ebson Parrish
Commission Vice Chair