

Fire Protection District (see Note 1) **vs. Fire District** (see Note 2):

A fire district can be created in two ways: on the Town board's own motion under Town Law section 170 if they deem it in the public's best interest; or upon the petition of "resident taxpayers owning taxable real property aggregating at least one-half of the assessed valuation of all taxable real property of the proposed district owned by resident taxpayers" under Town Law section 171.

Due to the fact that our current Fire Protection District rate is \$0.85/k and considering that Fire District rates are almost always more costly (Great Bend Fire District \$1.65/k / Carthage-Wilna Fire District \$2.46/k) the current Town board has taken the position that it should be the property owners that should make the decision to form a fire district – not the Town board. Based on increased property taxes for Fire Districts, property owners should be aware of selecting future candidates running for Town board positions that advocate the Town board making a motion to establish a Fire District vs. involving the property owners in this decision through the petition process.

Note 1: **Fire protection districts are administrative units of the towns. Towns, on behalf of their fire protection districts, contract with fire companies, fire districts, or villages for the provision of fire protection. The amounts paid under these contracts are assessed and levied on taxable property within the districts at the same time in the same manner as town taxes. All budgetary controls and financial reporting are handled by the town government. Currently, the town of Champion has two fire protection districts – one covered under contract with the West Carthage Fire Department and one covered under contract with the Copenhagen Fire Department.*

***Note 2: **Fire districts** are autonomous public corporations, independent from the towns in which they are located. They are governed by an elected board of fire commissioners who have the authority to levy taxes. Fire districts have the authority to incur debt without the approval of any other governmental entity. Currently, the Town of Champion has one fire district – the Great Bend Fire District.*