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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Gonzales DATE TYPED: 2/25/03 HB 642

SHORT TITLE: Taos Emergency Medical Services SB _____

ANALYST: Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$100.0			Recurring	GF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB58, SB65, SB292.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)
Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 642 appropriates \$100,000 from the general fund to the Department of Health for expenditure in fiscal year 2004 to provide for an expansion of services and increase operational costs of emergency medical services in Taos.

Significant Issues

HB 642 does not state if the appropriation is for the Town of Taos or Taos County. This analysis speaks to the appropriation as if it is for Taos County.

Taos County is an extremely rural county with a total population of approximately 30,000 people. During holidays, summer and the ski season, the population of Taos County triples. Taos County Emergency Services has a main station in the Town of Taos and a substation in the Town

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of Penasco. The Taos County main station currently has four on-line ambulance transport vehicles that respond to the majority of the emergency medical service runs throughout Taos County.

The substation in Penasco staffs two emergency medical technicians during weekdays between 9AM-5PM. After 5PM the area depends on response from the Taos County Emergency Services based in the Town of Taos. The staffing of the Taos County Emergency Services main station consists of two emergency medical technicians, one paramedic and an on-call crew comprised of two additional emergency medical technicians. These staff responds to emergency calls around the clock. Over the past year, Taos County has created a partnership with the Village of Questa to address the emergency medical service needs in the northern part of Taos County.

Taos County has a poor tax base with relatively high unemployment rate of 8.9 per 100 people, compared to the New Mexico unemployment rate of 7.2 per 100 populations. Unintentional injury is the third leading cause of death in the county and accounts for a major portion of the approximate 2300 emergency responses that occur in the county annually. In addition, residences are spread throughout the county, distant from population centers, which leads to long emergency response and transport times. The ambulance service is a critical safety net for both residents and tourists. Passage of HB 642 will help Taos County meet the need for additional EMS Services to help prevent injury morbidity and death.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 04 shall revert to the general fund.

According to the DOH Community Health Systems Division, EMS Bureau, Taos County will receive approximately \$20,000 from the Department of Health's annual EMS appropriation. This generally covers only about 15% of the County's operational expenses.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Injury Prevention and EMS Bureau would initiate and manage the contract with Taos County Emergency Services within current staff resources.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to:

HB58 County Taxes Imposition and SB65 County Emergency Tax Services, duplicate bills that authorize counties to impose taxes for EMS services,

SB292 New Mexico Finance Authority Loans for Public Projects, which includes loans for a fire truck in Taos County.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

SB642 does not identify if the funding is for the City of Taos or the County of Taos.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Response to injury incidents accounts for a large portion of emergency medical service calls in Taos County. Between years 1994-1998, the age-adjusted death rate for all injury in Taos County was 84.1 per 100,000 population, higher than the New Mexico injury death rate of 77.5 per 100,000 population. According to the New State Highway and Transportation Department, Taos County reported 839 accidents with 9 fatalities and 288 injuries in 2000.

There is a potential need to augment the Emergency Medical Service First Response capability of Fire Departments in the smaller communities throughout Taos County to support Taos County Emergency Medical Services.

Taos County's population grew by 30% in the 1990s and by 1.3% in the last year. (Source: Bureau of Census, and 2001 and 2002 County Indigent Fund Report, HPC).

AMENDMENTS

Recommend an amendment in line 12 and in Section 1, line 18 to clarify whether this funding is intended for all of Taos County or for the Town of Taos.

BD/sb