

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Lakehills residents attend annexation presentation

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Special to the Prophet

On Friday, July 23, Lakehills Community Center hosted a community awareness meeting to present facts on incorporating, annexing and ESDs.

Approximately 100 people were in attendance. A slide show represented the current ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction), and citations from State Law.

Some people thought that Bexar County could annex Lakehills, and still others thought San Antonio could not cross county lines.

The rules are as follows:

1. Counties cannot annex. Their boundaries are fixed (they may give up an area to an adjacent county through mutual agreement, but that is not annexation);
2. Cities can only annex to the current ETJ line (five miles for San Antonio...basically, all of Dancing Bear Ranch and that line moves out as areas are annexed);
3. Cities have no limitation on counties, as long as they are within the ETJ.

Until May 24, 2019, cities could annex at will. The only thing holding them back was state law requiring them to provide equivalent services within two years, such as police, fire, street maintenance, sewage and water (they usually take over existing municipal utility districts,

including garbage pick up and more). In some places that would be prohibitive, if not impossible.

The other topic of discussion was the possibility of creating an ESD (Emergency Services District) to help slow the encroachment. An ESD is also a taxing entity, although they have a cap of 10 cents per \$100 valuation.

MLVFD Fire Chief Ben Hicks said an ESD can provide Fire or EMS or both. These would initially be part volunteer and part paid positions (for the fire department).

There are two types of ESDs: a Single County ESD and a Multi County ESD, Ben Hicks said. A Single County ESD has predetermined boundaries within only one county, and is operated by a board of directors appointed by commissioners court.

A Multi County ESD has predetermined boundaries within more than one county. It has its board of directors elected by the residents of the area to be served.

Hicks said when a city takes over an area with an ESD, they must take over the services provided by the ESD. Since MLVFD is a 501c3, they would have to donate their equipment to another 501c3. He said they are having trouble retaining people, and are down from having more than 25 people, to about five or six.

In a follow-up interview, Alex Hicks said there were other ways for the VFD to dispose of equipment besides donating to another 501c3.

"The disposition of assets is entirely up to the board of directors as long as they do not violate the law," he said.