

# Council okays Pine Grove fire station, ambulance at Boiling Springs station

## *Help coming for clerk of court*

**By Alan Richard**

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County emergency vehicles still can't always get to the scene in less than 10 minutes, but the addition of new EMS units and a fire station may help reduce response times and lower insurance rates.

The Lexington County Council voted Monday to station an ambulance at the Boiling Springs Fire Station south of Gilbert, and promised a unit for the Hollow Creek community later this year.

The council also approved the \$250,000 construction of the Pine Grove Fire Station for the Three Fountains area near the Columbia airport.

County administrator Ed Parler said half a dozen new units are needed before everyone in the county can be assured prompt emergency response.

"For residents to get EMS response within 10 minutes, 90 percent of the time, we need 13 stations. We now have six," he said.

The EMS motion, made by councilman Andy Gambrell of South Congaree and seconded by Bruce Rucker of Sandy Run, passed 7-1 with Bruce Merchant of West Columbia opposing.

Gambrell's motion requires funding during this summer's budget process of four new employees and a new ambulance unit for the Hollow

Creek area.

Merchant said he did not favor spending extra money for the unit at Hollow Creek.

Councilman Leonard Sox of Lexington said he would rather have the unit at Hollow Creek over Boiling Springs, but agreed to the promise of having it soon.

The more southern location of the Boiling Springs station will allow rural areas in both the north and south portions of the county to be better served, county public safety director Chuck Whitehead said. Staff had recommended Boiling Springs as the best site, but that Hollow Creek would also be a good site.

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