

Small tax could save Brewerton's ambulance service

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BREWERTON, N.Y. -- If nothing is done, Brewerton's fire chief says the lives of thousands could soon be at stake, if they need help in the nick of time.



"The problem is every year we're in the red, and fundraising is just not enough to be able to keep the paramedics, the drivers, the ambulance in service," said Michael Stassi, Brewerton Fire Chief and Ambulance Director.

His idea is a tax, of up to fifty dollars per homeowner per year. The hundred grand raised would keep the ambulance stationed on Main Street, rather than relying on an ambulance traveling ten miles from North Syracuse. He has the support of top public officials.

"If you can save one life, for being able to respond five minutes earlier, I think it's worth it," said Town Supervisor Chet Dudzinski.

Up to 20 houses sit here on Fancher road, one of the more remote places in the Brewerton Fire Protection District. Response times to this point, is currently between five and ten minutes. Should the Brewerton ambulance service be dissolved, that response time could jump to as much as twenty five minutes. Not something residents here are willing to accept.

"If my grandkids are out here, or even my wife or in-laws, get hurt, or have a heart attack or something, definitely you want the quick response time. There isn't a doubt in my mind," said Bill Camp, who lives on Fancher Road.

If enough voters are as sure as Camp is, the tax will pass. If it does, Stassi says they wouldn't have to pass the hat anymore to pay for staff, training and equipment. Their only concern would be racing to emergencies.