



Davis-New Home Fire Department to Receive SPLOST Funding and Announces Leadership Transition

Posted on October 6, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson



TRENTON, Ga. (October 6, 2025) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners has approved a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) request from the Davis and New Home Fire Departments to purchase a mobile air compressor system that will enhance fire response capabilities across the county. The announcement came as Fire Chief Mark Gibson also outlined a leadership transition and organizational restructuring effort that will streamline operations and strengthen service delivery.

Chief Gibson informed the board that he has officially assumed command of both the Davis and New Home departments following the resignation of Chief Dennis Kelly, who stepped down to focus on expanded responsibilities with Puckett EMS. “Dennis continues to serve with us as a firefighter when his schedule allows,” Gibson said. “We appreciate his leadership and the years he has dedicated to the New Home community.”

The departments are now in the process of formally consolidating their operations under a new structure known as Sand Mountain Fire Protection Services. The combined entity will operate as a single 501(c)(3) corporation, with two divisions doing business as Davis Fire Department and New Home Fire Department. “This structure keeps both community identities intact while strengthening how we train, manage, and respond,” Gibson explained. “Our goal is to create a unified service model that benefits all of Sand Mountain.”

As part of the transition, the department sought SPLOST funds totaling \$32,000 for the purchase of a used Mako 6,000 PSI mobile air compressor system. The expense will be shared equally between the Davis and New Home departments, using \$16,000 from each department’s SPLOST allocation.

The system allows firefighters to refill self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) bottles directly on scene during fire suppression or rescue operations. “This unit can fill two SCBA bottles at once and provide air on-site for as long as we have diesel fuel for the generator,” Gibson said. “It eliminates the need to leave a scene to refill equipment, which keeps our crews ready to respond.”

The compressor’s 6,000 PSI capacity exceeds the standard 4,500 PSI rating of most SCBA bottles, allowing the department to fill bottles to their full operating pressure and maintain compliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. This upgrade also enables refilling from the department’s cascade systems, which had previously been limited by lower pressure equipment.

Gibson noted that new units of this type typically cost around \$109,000. The used compressor, purchased from Pennsylvania, has fewer than 650 operating hours and has been stored indoors, making it an exceptional value for the county. Because the unit became available unexpectedly, the request was added to the workshop agenda to allow the county to act quickly before it was sold elsewhere.

During the discussion, Commissioner Melissa Bradford asked whether the purchase had been reviewed and approved by the county’s Fire Chiefs Council. Fire Chief Rodney Ross confirmed that the council had voted on and approved the request in advance. Her question reflected the commission’s continued diligence in ensuring that all SPLOST-funded projects receive appropriate departmental review and coordination.

The mobile compressor will be housed at the New Home Fire Department, where it will be readily accessible to all Dade County fire stations. It will supplement existing stationary compressors at other locations and be deployed for large-scale or extended emergency responses through the county’s mutual aid system.

Chief Gibson also highlighted the department’s continued response success across both districts. “Out of roughly 14 to 15 fire calls this year, we’ve only missed one structure fire and one vehicle fire,” he reported. “We’re proud of our volunteers for maintaining consistent coverage across the communities.”

Commissioners praised the collaboration and responsible use of SPLOST funds. Chairman Don Townsend described the purchase as “a practical and cost-effective investment in public safety,” noting that “this unit gives firefighters more flexibility and strengthens our countywide readiness.”

The board unanimously approved the request for inclusion on the consent agenda. The compressor will be placed in service following delivery and inspection.