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Citizens group circulating petition to build new hospital

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Mariposa County Sheriff Jeremy Briese signs the petition supporting the hospital sales tax initiative. Briese signed the petition at the Mariposa Pride event this past Saturday. (Submitted Photo)

The Citizens to Save the Hospital committee is now circulating petitions to gather signatures and has launched a new website to support the effort.

This Citizens Initiative proposes adopting a 1 percent sales tax for a period of 40 years to provide the funds needed by the John C. Fremont Healthcare District to design, construct and equip a new community hospital that meets all applicable seismic safety and other building standards.

The funds can also be used to modify and re-purpose existing facilities to better satisfy the emergency medical care and other healthcare needs of Mariposa County residents and visitors for generations to come, officials from the group said in a press release.

The Citizens Initiative addresses three concerns voters had with Measure N, which failed to get the two-thirds vote needed to pass in last year's general election. The first is to add a "sunset" to terminate the sales tax after 40 years. The second is to revise the expenditure plan to more clearly describe how the funds can be spent. And the third is to add an accountability and transparency section to require more rigorous accounting.

"Measure N received support from 63 percent of Mariposa County voters and, by making these changes, we are confident we will get both the number of signatures needed and the votes needed to pass the measure this time," said committee co-chair Suzette Prue.

After the signatures on the petitions are certified by county election officials, the Citizens Initiative will go to the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors who can either adopt the ordinance without alteration or place a measure on the ballot for the June 2022 primary election, when it would require a majority of votes to pass.

"John C. Fremont Hospital is a community hospital, so it is quite appropriate that we are pursuing a community effort in the form of this Citizens Initiative to save it," added committee co-chair Beth Tomsick.

The new website, SaveTheHospital.org, contains a schedule of the locations, days and times committee representatives will be gathering signatures. The website also includes additional information about the citizens initiative, including the full text of the ordinance and a comprehensive set of frequently asked questions, as well as how to volunteer or make a donation to help fund the campaign.



Local resident Trent Williams is shown signing the petition in order to get an initiative on the ballot to fund a new hospital. (Submitted Photo)

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