

Case Study: Bear Valley Community Healthcare District

For nearly 40 years, Bear Valley Community Hospital (BVCH) has provided life-saving emergency (ER) medical care, acute care, skilled nursing, and related medical services to the residents and visitors of Big Bear Mountain. This is where victims of heart attacks, strokes, recreational or car-related accidents and other emergencies, can find THE ONLY EMERGENCY ROOM in Big Bear Valley. The next full service hospital ER is about an hour away.

The hospital's small E.R is one of the busiest for small rural hospitals in the state, logging over 10,000 visits per year. **Over the years, community support of this little hospital has become VITAL to keeping it open and operational.** In particular, for 20 years the hospital had relied on a modest annual parcel tax paid by local property owners. In 1994 and 2005, local voters overwhelmingly approved the small assessment to supplement its operating budget and keep the ONLY Emergency Room on the mountain open. The \$45 annual assessment provides \$1.1M/year (~\$11 million over 10 years) in essential operating revenue to the hospital.

Because *every* minute counts in a medical emergency, someone spoke up with a good idea: "We need a hospital in Big Bear Valley."



That's where OUR story began over a half century ago...

To maintain continued access to emergency medical care on the mountain and protect the hospital from eventual closure, BVCH's parcel tax had to be renewed by June 30, 2015. This was not going to be easy as there was a long history of LOSING measures on the mountain, including: **Measure Q** – FAILED BVCHD Bond (June 2008) with 65.24% support. **Measure B** – FAILED BVCHD Bond (June 2007) 63.94%. **Measure M** – FAILED SCHOOL Parcel Tax (July 2012) 51.51%. A supermajority of 66.7% was required to win all these measures. **Telling the BVCHD story effectively would turn out to be key to its future and CliffordMoss was there to drive this monumental communications effort.**



Leading a team of experts, CliffordMoss drove the effort to determine the electoral "feasibility" of winning a parcel tax renewal and build the communications strategy to rally the community's support that would endure long after any election. BVCHD conducted extensive "listening activities" using the proven CliffordMoss approach to ENGAGE with and LISTEN to hospital stakeholders, opinion leaders and community members. The listening tour was then conducted among

Bear Valley voters using a "**Your Story**" mailer, which elicited a tremendous outpouring of responses. Community members returned numerous cards, sharing their stories of lives saved by BVCH. Outreach efforts continued with **hundreds of phone conversations** made by Auxiliary volunteers and three well-attended informational **Town Hall Meetings** where community members could get their questions answered by **BVCHD CEO Raymond Hino**.

When it came to **campaign**, CliffordMoss shifted gears and developed the winning strategy to take the measure to victory. The environment was demanding, requiring a compelling message and the help of a small, but mighty volunteer army. Voters had the final say when they cast their ballots on Election Day June 3, 2014. **RESULT: Measure F** earned a fantastic **80.56% YES vote** to keep the little mountain hospital and its ER open and fully operational.

