SPECIAL DISTRICTS

THE MOST LOCAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
What is a special district?
• Local governments created by the people.
• Deliver specialized services.
• Authorized through state’s statutes.
• 30,000+ special districts in the United States.
• Districts can respond to a changing world.
• Maintain critical infrastructures and evolve.
Establishing & Governing Special Districts
• Formed through a public process.
• Owned and overseen by the community.
• Governed by a public board of directors.
• Subject to state’s sunshine laws.
• Audits and regulatory compliance.
A History of Special Districts
• Date back to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century with parks.
• Toll roads and irrigation in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.
• Originated to meet a need.
• First general statute passed in 1887.
Special Districts Funding
• Share of property taxes.
• Rates for service.
• Most do not receive share of sales tax.
• Ballot initiatives.
• Maintaining infrastructure.
• Strategically develop financial reserves.
Enterprise and Non-enterprise Revenues
• Enterprise revenues are fees for service.
• Non-enterprise revenues benefit the community.
• Examples of enterprise revenues include:
  • Water, sewer, and electricity rates.
• Examples of non-enterprise revenues include:
  • Property taxes and assessments.
Independent vs. Dependent Special Districts
• Separate from counties or cities.

• Independent obtains authority from community.
  • Governing body serves independent from other governing agencies.
  • High degree of autonomy to fulfill the mission of the district.

• Dependent tied to another unit of government.
  • City or county appointees serve at the pleasure of the appointing body.
  • Appointees may serve in an ex-officio capacity.
  • Subject to the interests and influence of other governing bodies.
Special Districts are Local Service Specialists
• **Local:** Formed, governed, and owned by the community.

• **Service:** Designed to meet the essential needs of the families and businesses they serve.

• **Specialists:** Employ highly trained experts focused on a single mission.