

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

We are continuing to explore ways to better connect with our neighbors and have decided to distribute this newsletter by snail mail. Our address list is a subset of addresses provided by the County Tax Assessor Office. Our much smaller email list is formed when you or a neighbor request to be a part of the newsletter distribution. We use our email lists for no other purpose other than this newsletter and rare, important notices.

We are trying to cover all of the ESD#2 property owners as well as those who are living in the district. If you are not receiving our quarterly e-newsletters, please give us your email address. You can do this by emailing me at wllvdfire@gmail.com. Your fourth-quarter newsletter will arrive in your inbox. We are not planning subsequent mail outs because of the expense. Please, sign up for the e-newsletter.

NEIGHBORHOOD PICNICS

In September, we are going to host our first neighborhood picnic for the folks in Wayland Crossing. The idea is to provide additional opportunities for everyone in our district to get to know about the ESD and the WLLVFD, and for you to meet some of us individually and to just share some ideas. We want your input into how you would like to see these important community organizations grow, how you want them to better address district needs and how we can better serve the county at large. Please look for a community picnic in your neighborhood.

We are about emergency response, about making our world safe and secure. Our charge goes beyond being firefighters and medical first responders; we strive to be good neighbors.

COUNTY BURN BAN



UPDATE ON OUR RURAL WATER SUPPLY PROJECT FOR THE ESD#2

In the second quarter newsletter, we addressed a significant opportunity for the district as well as the county, concerning our effort to address a major shortcoming in Limestone County, as well as in most rural counties statewide.

Here is the challenge. In terms of adequate firefighting, a critical need is access to enough firefighting water. To 'fight' a structure fire, not just prevent the fire from spreading, requires tons of water. To control a major grass fire or brush fire like those we often see in our hot, dry summer months we need to have the capacity to rapidly refill our brush trucks so they can stay on station at the fire front and preventing those fires from becoming destructive wildfire disasters!

Here is an update and explanation of what has been happening at stations #2 and #3 as we've watched ESD#2 and the WLLVFD are making significant headway on our goal for a district-wide water supply system.

In late spring, we received an \$84,000 grant from the Moody Foundation in Galveston to install water plants at our two substations, placing 16,000 gallons of firefighting water and the high-capacity water pumps needed to fill firefighting vehicles. Each is within five miles of all the homes in our ISO-PPC-8b areas.

Four HUGE, 8,000-gallon water tanks arrived!



To date, we have completed the tasks outlined in the project: drilling the water wells, setting the storage tanks, hooking up the two high-capacity pumps and completing all electrical and plumbing work.



We recently completed the system inspection and final pump testing. They worked GREAT!!



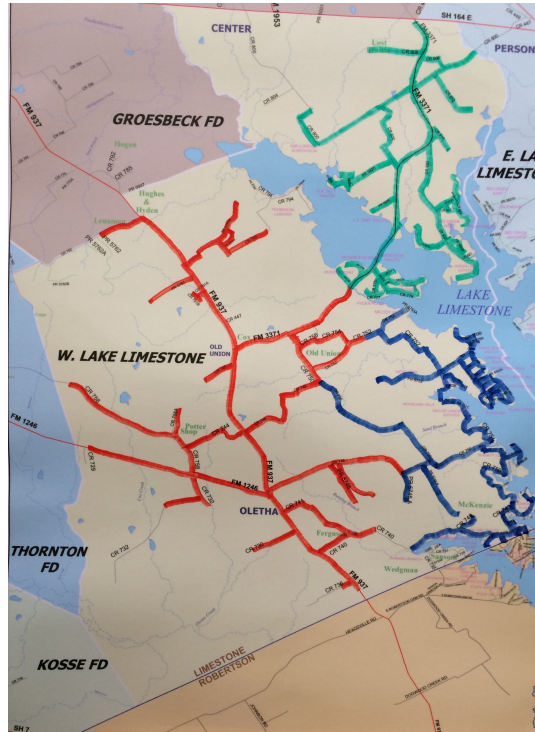
Each water plant can provide 50-gpm of agricultural grade water to keep the tanks filled. The high-pressure pumps can fill a 1,000-gallon fire engine in just four minutes! That's fast! These new water plants at stations #2 and #3 on LCR 750 and FM 3371, respectively, join the water plant at the main fire station on FM 937. All together the WLLVFD and EDS#2 have 57,000-gallons of firefighting water available to meet fire emergencies in the south county.

Please stop by to check them out, and if you would like a tour of one of the stations, then just give the Chief a call.

THE FIVE-MILE RULE

One might ask, why has the ESD#2 and WLLVFD leadership been so focused on building the new station on FM3371, acquiring a third attack engine and establishing water supply at stations #2 and #3. Well, one significant measure of a department's firefighting potential comes from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This measure results from an analysis of public protection capability and comes from an outside agency that is well respected nationwide. ISO's expert staff collect information about fire

protection capabilities in a district and provides this information to insurance companies. Some companies exclusively base home insurance on these ISO-PPC ratings. Other companies use a variety of measures, all of which relate to how well a home is covered by a fire department's equipment and personnel, as well as firefighting water supplies available to the department. The Five-Mile Rule concerns the road distance between an existing structure and the nearest engine company and, for rural areas without fire hydrants, the nearest significant water sources.



Above is an image of our district and the areas covered by each of our three stations. The red and blue "roads" have been covered by the engines in the main fire station (red) and station #2 (blue). The newly acquired engine will go into station #3 (green).

NEW TURNOUT GEAR FOR FIREFIGHTERS

The department received a \$9,000 equipment grant from the Texas Forest Service and the ESD#2 has budgeted \$5,000 to add to this amount. We have received five complete sets of "bunker gear" or personal protective equipment (PPE) for our most active firefighters. Monies for one or two more sets has been held in reserve for new recruits as each set must be properly sized for the individual.

Of course, all our firefighters have individual protective clothing (actually two sets, a heavy set for structure fires and a lighter wildland set for summers' brush fires.)



To date, these have come from the Texas Forest Service's Helping Hands Program that offers to small volunteer fire departments PPE that had been retired from large departments.

It is important for WLLVFD and ESD#2 leadership that emergency responders have the best equipment and gear. We are pleased that with this much-needed upgrade.

SUMMER FIRE SEASON IS UPON US; OUR FIRE FIGHTING VEHICLES ARE READY

The department has its fire trucks serviced and ready to respond to inevitable grass fires that seem to "pop up" when the temperatures rise and the rains go away.



This picture includes two attack engines on the left and two brush trucks on the right. The one on the far right is a rescue vehicle that is equipped with bumper sprayers, and hand lines with a 500-gallon water tank in the back. The second from the right is our large, rough country, brush truck with a 750-gallon tank and two hand lines. It too has bumper sprayers which allow the vehicle driver to "roll" along a fire's front as firefighters in the rear pour water on the flames from 1" hand lines.

Our summer fire season is here as we recently fought a grass fire that consumed around 25-acres. In the image in the next column you can see two of our brush trucks and firefighters completing "overhaul", that is making certain that the fire is in fact extinguished and does not flare up. It is certainly hot work but it keeps the south county safe and protects us all!

This fire only required two of our small brush trucks and not the large brush truck nor the fire engines.



But, engines often serve as nurse tenders or "refill vehicles" for our brush trucks while combatting a wildfire emergency or putting out a larger pasture fire. During a fire fighting operation, this period for on-scene refill also offers time for "rehab", that is time to hydrate, cool off and rest a bit as firefighting teams observe departmental SOPs/SOGs, paying attention to firefighter safety. One of our emergency medical responder members or an associate member will be present helping in the role of rehab officer.

By the way, when the engine's 1000-gallons of firefighting water is expended during refill operations, the engine's driver (or engineer) must go to our nearest water plant for its ready refill and speedy return.

All this for a "simple" brush fire which requires people and teamwork: firefighters, drivers, engineers, rehab personnel, and the incident commander. Some are active firefighters and first responders but others are "just" volunteers in support roles like the rehab or hydration specialist that help at the scene.

WE NEED ASSOCIATE MEMBERS IN LOTS OF AREAS

There are many roles that can contribute to the department's broader mission, roles for **Associate Members** who are not Firefighters or Medical First Responders.

We need help and many roles contribute to the VFD's broader mission. Such as:
Administration and logistical support
Enhanced response capabilities
Effective operational support programs
Public education and outreach

We need YOUR help in these associate positions:
Fire and Rescue Assistants: like, traffic control personnel, or hydration/rehab specialists
Medical Response Assistants: taking medical notes and securing landing zones
Public Outreach: making public presentations, teaching at schools or in-house training
Grants and Contract Administrator
Public and Media Relations: writing newspaper and magazine articles
Graphic Artist and Publisher: creating posters and being our web site manager
Apparatus Driver & Equipment Operator: work with vehicles and be on-scene freeing up a trained firefighter
Fire Safety & Equipment Inspector: helping with monthly checks
Office Manager or Office Administrator
Radio Communications & Local Dispatch
Vehicle Mechanic or Maintenance Specialist
Information Specialist/Data Manager
Fundraising & Events Coordinator
Facilities Manager: helping with station upkeep
Department Historian: record our oral history and create a written history of the district
Grounds keeper/Landscaper
There are numerous opportunities to serve!!

WE NEED MEMBERS TOO!

- Mostly Volunteer Fire Department members are:
 - Not generalists
 - Not Fire Department Jacks-of-all-trades.
- Members are:
 - Individuals with particular talents and interests;
 - Folks who serve in one capacity or another.
- We are not like "Swiss Army" knives...
 - with ten or twenty blades,
 - expected to be good at and responsible for everything, and
 - to be aggressive nozzle-firefighters and paramedic supermen, etc.



- We are more like comfortable, "Old-Timer" knives...
 - with one main blade, his/her primary first responder contribution,
 - a secondary blade as another interest area, and
 - of course a third being our desire to contribute time, talent, and energy to departmental functions,
- "Old Timers" have just a few areas in which we...
- contribute....serve...help out.

FROM THE CHIEF

"We're helping our neighbors."

You may have seen that slogan on the sign in front of the fire station on FM937. That's what we do. It's no more complicated than that! As first responders in our organization, we listen to our radios; when there is a call for help from one of our neighbors, we promptly respond and see what we can do to make the situation better.

Altruism is defined as unselfish concern for the welfare of others. It's a trait that best describes what it takes to be a first responder. It's the reason we do what we do. We find it personally satisfying to make our community a safer place to live and enjoy.

We call ourselves "the fire department" but we are not "Chicago Fire"! Our Emergency Services Organization (ESO) is made up of volunteers that live in our area, so our ESO looks just like our community, primarily consisting of retired professionals with a smattering of younger men and women, all with different backgrounds and different skills.

There is room for you to join this team of *neighbors helping neighbors*. You have a unique set of skills that can be used to build a successful organization. Your skills can help us grow, whether they are administrative, secretarial, bookkeeping, record keeping, program development, purchasing, publishing and social media, fund raising, truck driving, maintenance and mechanical skills, teaching, medical practice, rescue, firefighting, or one of a hundred other niches. All of our talents when brought together, will help accomplish the mission of our ESO. Maybe, you have an altruistic itch that needs to be scratched!

We in "the fire department" can think of few undertakings that are nobler than *helping our neighbors* in their times of need; going to them and seeing what we can do to provide assistance and assurance.

Come talk to me about what you can do to help us accomplish the mission of being a model rural Emergency Services Organization

MEMBER FOR THIS QUARTER

Paul Loeffler is a Commissioner on the ESD#2 Board and an Associate member of the WLLVFD where he is serving as its Grants Administrator. At the department, he is involved in proposal preparation and project management, as well as serving as a "sounding board" for Chief McWhirter during their Tuesday meetings.

Paul is a retired Professor of Chemistry from Sam Houston State University where he had considerable experience with grants and contracts, resulting in various collaborative



projects involving industrial partners, federal organizations and private foundations. This background helps him as he and the Fire Chief prepare grant proposals. In the last year,

well over a dozen proposals have been submitted with various levels of complexity and ranging in size from \$400,000 to \$200.

In addition to learning about volunteer emergency response organizations, doing background grant research and creating the narratives for proposals he enjoys working with the many talented members of the ESD#2 Board and the West Lake VFD.

As an Associate Member, he goes to monthly meetings, can participate in Saturday morning hands-on training, helps with our various community functions, and can even go on emergency calls! (Assisting ... but only to his current level of training.)

FREE CPR-AED TRAINING

The WLLVFD offers Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training that is certified by the American Heart Association. Training sessions are arranged for groups of up to six individuals. To schedule a session for your group just email our trainer, Cathy Rayburn, at pqclr@yahoo.com.

If your neighborhood is interested in having a portable AED that can be located for convenient access, the department will be glad to help you select and order your purchase.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The WLLVFD was incorporated in 1997 and the goal was to make fire calls in an area around the LCR 750/751 area. Within several years, a fire station was built on land donated by Bill Sadler for its first vehicle, a converted pickup and, a few years later, for a donated fire truck. Times were tough and monetary contributions few and far



between, as there are stories of members collecting cans to pay the fuel bills! But, their vision expanded!

Volunteers and local citizens recognized the need for an ESD to meet the unique challenges of the area. In 2011, ESD#2 was created to provide both fire suppression and emergency medical response. Major challenges existed, such as constructing a fully functioning fire house, one centrally located in our primary response area; acquiring the necessary complement of equipment, brush trucks, fire engines, and rescue

vehicles; recruiting additional members; developing professional protocols, providing necessary training; obtaining ISO certification; and creating appropriate management structure.

Thus, in 2012 the EDS#2 funded the main fire station on FM937 and purchased a new fire engine (the white engine seen in previous pictures.) In 2017, substation #3 on FM3371 was constructed and, over the past seven years, our vehicle inventory has been increased to seven fire and rescue trucks, although now all "brand new!" A true ESD-VFD partnership and effective emergency service organization has evolved.

In 2018, a Risk Assessment Study was conducted and our Five-Year Plan was expanded. The department obtained needed emergency medical supplies and began recruiting EMTs and sending members to EMR training. In 2019, station#3's engine was acquired. We just finished our 16,000-gallon water plants and are to begin introducing their potential use to our mutual aid partners, and county association of fire chiefs.

Currently, we have a professional fire chief along with experienced officers and dedicated commissioners assisting a 22-member fire department that is universally recognized as a leader in the county because of its competence and forward-looking activities.

MISSION OF THE WLLVFD

We protect the lives and property of the citizens within our district and those of our mutual aid partners through fire suppression services, medical rescue assistance, and first responder support. We are committed to improving our effectiveness in serving the needs of the residents of our district, county and state. Our goal is to be a model, rural volunteer fire department that identifies and meets the unique challenges experienced in our under-funded, rural county. .

**West Lake Limestone VFD
and
Emergency Services
District #2**

**NEWSLETTER – 3RD QTR.
SEPTEMBER 2019**

FALL FISH FRY – October 19.

Our annual fall fund raiser will be held in a cooler month and in the evening; on October 19th from 4:00-7:00. The event will be held at our main fire station on FM937. Each meal will include fried catfish fillets, coleslaw, a roll and drink for just \$10.00/plate. Please come join us!!

SUSTAINING MEMBERS.

Each month several individuals who live in the district make regular contributions to the department. Donations make up a significant portion of our WLLVFD budget and help keep the department functioning properly. Please consider a modest, monthly contribution, anything from \$5.00 to \$50.00, to help recruit more members and provide for those we have.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Fire Chief Allen McWhirter (254-729-0165 ; amacfire@hotmail.com);
President of ESD#2 Board of Commissioners, Vernon Davis (trmih2772@gmail.com);
Editor of the Newsletter, Paul Loeffler (wllvdfire@gmail.com)



WLLVFD & ESD #2
6614 FM 937
Thornton, TX 76687

Postal Local Customer

