

West Lake Limestone VFD and Emergency Services District #2

YOUR E-NEWSLETTER AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Those of us at the WLLVFD and the ESD#2 are exploring ways to connect with our neighbors; this is one of our experiments. We have pledged to use our email list for no other purpose other than this newsletter or, perhaps, a very important notice. Because we have coverage for only about 10% of the property owners, please share this newsletter with others and encouraging them to give us their email address. They can contact me at wllvfdfire@gmail.com. Thanks!!!

WHAT IS IT ABOUT LEADERSHIP? *“When you are called to lead, you are called to advance, move forward, and improve the situation.”*

The challenges of a rural VFDs focus on protecting people and property through fire suppression, rescue, and medical services. To provide these services, we need volunteers who are well trained, and have the resources they need to do their jobs well. These volunteers need an atmosphere that is supportive, exciting, and forward-looking. In this newsletter, let's ask some questions about tangible advances being made, movement forward on stated goals, and improvements in our situation here in the south county. Let's see what our WLLVFD and ESD#2 leaders have been up to.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO IMPROVE THE FIRE SUPPRESSION CAPABILITIES IN THE ESD?

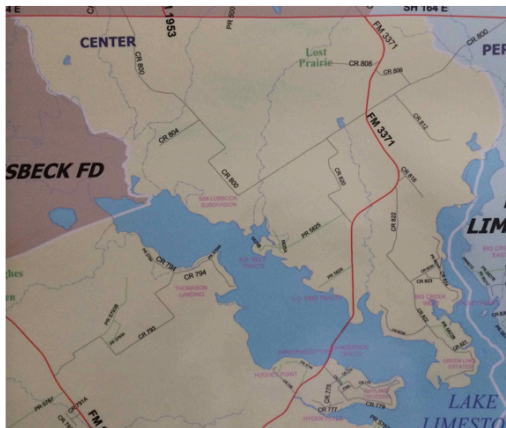
There are two BIG jumps about to happen in our firefighting capabilities. The first will bring many more homes in the ESD up to ISO-PPC 8b. In 2018 the ESD constructed substation-3 at Park-3 on FM 3371. The new advancement is that we have acquired a fire engine called “Old Ladder-17” for the area around FM 3371. Our Assistant Chief and his team have been repairing or replacing valves, gauges, gaskets, etc. so that she can pass inspection as a qualified “pumper.” The Fire Chief and his team are working to identify the funds for hose and equipment (i.e. axes, ladders, hose, and air packs).

Once equipped and in service “Old Ladder-17” will be christened “Engine-2506”. She will be housed in substation #3 and will allow the final third of our district to achieve ISO-PPC

8b status. Folks in subdivisions in the northwest portion of the ESD, starting with homes in Wayland Crossing and Arrowhead Point just south of the bridge and extending up into “the LCR 800's” to Sim-Lubbock subdivision as well as down to those near Green Lakes Estates on the peninsula will all gain the same high quality fire protection WLLVFD gives to the rest of us. (Look for your neighborhood if you live in this NW-third of the ESD!)

The other advance in firefighting capability addresses a critical need in most rural counties, adequate firefighting water. To ‘fight’ a structure fire, not just prevent the fire from spreading, requires tons of water (literally 125 tons!) Our fire chief is realizing his vision for a district-wide water supply system that's light years ahead of any rural county in the state. Currently, the VFD has one 16,000-gallon water plant at the main fire station on FM 937. We recently received an \$84,000 grant from the Moody Foundation in Galveston to install similar water plants at our two substations. That places 16,000 gallons of firefighting water within five miles of all the homes in our ISO-PPC-8b areas. On a technical note, this water supply improvement moves us closer to ISO-PPC-7 (an “unheard-of” rating for rural VFDs!!)

Area Serviced by Station-3



“Ol’ Ladder 17”



WHAT ABOUT MOVING FORWARD ON SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE...THE “PEOPLE STUFF?”

The VFD and ESD leadership are addressing recruitment and retention as well as training issues. After all, how does a citizen-volunteer make the transition to a competent, volunteer firefighter and/or medical first-responder? How do our VFD members retain and improve their skills? Leaders must provide outstanding training opportunities. They do!

Last year the department received a \$7,000 training grant through the Texas Forest Service for online coursework. The subscription is quite extensive, offering two classes per month for members (four/mo. for officers) on all aspects of firefighting. Our monthly hands-on training aligns with this online material to best reinforce concepts and skills. The once-a-month, Saturday morning, training sessions emphasize our specific “standard operating guidelines” (SOGs) so that everyone on the team “knows the drill” and has confidence in his/her teammates. West Lake’s training sessions are led by the departmental leaders, many of whom had been professional firefighters and have extensive experience.

This focus on quality training extends to our medical first responders. Our medical calls focus on the “golden 8 minutes” that precede the arrival of EMTs/paramedics from LMC-EMS. A VFD first responder generally trains to first aid and emergency medical responder (EMR) certifications. We at West Lake are fortunate because we have leaders in both the ESD and the VFD with EMS and EMT experience. Thus, our on-scene response is well respected and well integrated with LMC-EMS practices resulting in seamless transition and rapid response. We train to defined protocols with classes provided by our experienced members as well as invited outside professionals. As an example, in our district we train on and carry AEDs, so upon arrival at a cardiac emergency, an LMC paramedic will find CPR on-going and AED use, if necessary. Because medical response training requires external, state certification, the department encourages members to participate in formal coursework. Of course, this encouragement includes the leadership’s commitment to pay for tuition, “room ‘n board”, travel, and testing fees necessary to obtain EMR (or even EMT) certification.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN TERMS OF OUR MEDICAL RESPONSE ADVANCEMENTS?

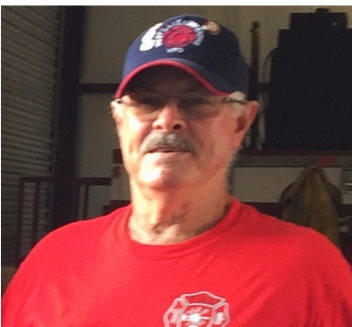
The department purchased a new set of CPR training “dummies” to comply with American Heart Association requirements. (By the way, you and three or four friends can schedule free CPR/AED first aid training by our certified instructor). Recently a local ambulance service went out of business, and the Chief saw this as an opportunity, acquiring the relevant supplies. We are prepared! We have the training and resources for most medical emergencies!

ARE THERE OTHER INITIATIVES TO MOVE FORWARD AND IMPROVE OUR SITUATION?

The leaders are exploring an outreach effort, a “neighbors helping neighbors” program. Of course, we will retain our activities at the fire department like the Memorial Day BBQ, but want to expand these by scheduling some community picnics that can get small groups of folks together with department members. We’d like to talk about what we do and what you can do; what we need and what you need. We just want to get to know you and for you to get to know us.

WHO IS OUR OUTSTANDING MEMBER FOR THIS QUARTER?

Assistant Chief Warren Miller



Warren Miller Jr., as a founding member, has been an instrumental part of the department for 16 years. He is the Assistant Chief and Maintenance Officer as well as a Duty Officer and a Firefighter. His responsibilities as Maintenance Officer include: hands-on maintenance actions, equipment diagnostics, preventative maintenance, parts ordering, and scheduling outside vehicle repair. Warren is well suited for this responsibility in that he has 20-years of experience as a U.S. Army Maintenance Supervisor and an additional 30-years as a Contractor Representative to the U.S. Army in a similar capacity. While with the department he received formal training as an F-3 Emergency Vehicle Technician trained on fire pump maintenance and vehicle operation at the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). He also completed Fire Chief training through TEEX and Firefighter training through this department.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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REMEMBER the WLLVFD ANNUAL BBQ FUNDRAISER – Saturday, May 25th, 11:00-2:00 at the main fire station (6614 FM 937). BBQ Plate = Brisket, Sausage, Cole Slaw, Beans & Fixins’ only \$10.00/Plate. Following at 2:30 will be the drawings for the Oryx Hunt & Deer Rifle Raffle.