

WEST LAKE LIMESTONE VFD AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #2

Volume: 2018-Q4

RECENT SUCCESSES

Last year you may have noticed the new brush truck sitting out in front of the main fire station. It was obtained through a grant from the Texas Forest Service along with matching money provided by our Emergency Services District.

As a matter of fact, during 2017 we brought in more money from external grants than we received through ESD and county taxes. Your WLLVFD and ESD #2 are working to build a better fire department.

You may have seen that our newest substation has been completed over on FM 3371. It has taken the leaders at the WLLVFD and ESD#2 three years to accomplish this milestone.

First, the Brazos River Authority and Limestone County needed to buy into the idea. Then they agreed to provide the land so we could build the structure, of course, using ESD funds. Now the families in the northeast quadrant of our service area can anticipate improved fire response and a better insurance rating once we get our third fire engine. We also have plans to add a water plant with 16,000 gallons of firefighting water!



New Substation on FM 3371

NEW NEWSLETTER AND NEW E-MAIL FORMAT

We have decided to reactivate our newsletter so that we can better connect with the property owners in our district, keep them informed of the goings-on within the WLLVFD and the ESD#2 board of commissioners, and do some fund-raising. In our previous newsletter attempts we used “snail mail” for delivery. Frankly, this was inefficient in that it generally cost more for postage than the funds received as contributions. This time we are going to try email, although we will mail and distribute a few newsletters the old fashioned way. Presently we are making an effort to generate an accurate data base of email addresses; please share this with your neighbors and urge them to send us an email (wllvfdfire@gmail.com) if they did not receive their copy.

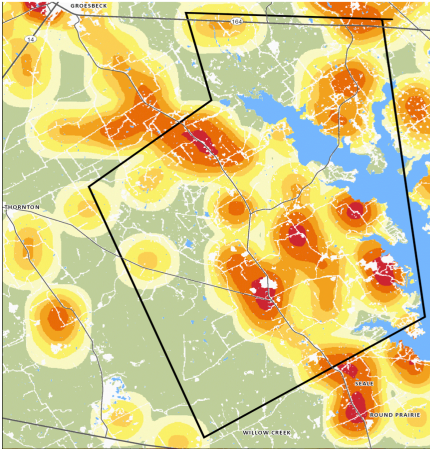
---- OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE!! ----

EXPANDED DEFINITIONS FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Chief McWhirter has expanded our list of support positions and job descriptions for folks who want to serve the department but don't care to be firefighters or medical responders. These are our Associate Members. Interestingly, there are many things that have to take place before our first responders can deploy to a fire call, medical emergency, or an auto accident. All our vehicles need to be checked and maintained; all the necessary equipment needs to be kept up-to-date. Gosh, the bills need to be paid, training aids need to be set up, grant opportunities need to be researched, and even the lawn needs to be mowed! The simple stuff in the life of the department is no less important. Associate Members serve as administrative assistants, inventory coordinators, mechanics, or CPR instructors at the fire station, and traffic coordinators or hydration specialists during emergency calls. Please feel free to give Chief McWhirter a call if you can help us, want to serve your community, or simply “got the need” to work on some big trucks!

HOW DOES THE ESD AND VFD GO ABOUT EVALUATING THE FIRE HAZARDS AND WILDFIRE RISKS IN OUR AREA?

The Fire Chief and other experienced firefighters have driven down every road in our area and talked to many of the residents, ranch managers, and business operators. We have worked with folks at the county and the Texas Forest Service (TxFS) and then used these inputs to generate the department's Risk Assessment Report. Another comprehensive report, the Texas Wildfire Risk Summary Report for Limestone County ESD#2, was commissioned using state data about the types of ground cover, densities of residences and structures, kinds of hazardous fuel sources, and historical wildfires to compile



Wildfire Ignition Density

a study of wildfire risk in our district. The reports are impressive! Stop by the main fire station if you want to check them out.

The Wildfire Ignition Density figure (TxFS summary) illustrates wildfire risk areas within our district. The irregular hexagon approximates ESD#2, where we live and where our firefighters face challenges. Information like this has helped the WLLVFD and ESD to strategically locate our three fire stations, create long-range plans for the acquisition of additional firefighting vehicles, as well as develop effective training plans, operational protocols, and detailed mutual aid agreements.

Of the burnable acreage, 57% is of moderate to very high risk of wildfires! Folks that's a lot!!



Firefighter Dan Mills

FIREFIGHTER OF THE QUARTER

Dan Mills has served the residents of West Lake for three years. As a Lieutenant in our fire department, he is responsible for Fire Station #2. Dan is a retired refinery operator, has two children, and lives on the lake with his wife Pat, also a member of the fire department. Dan is an accomplished musician, playing guitar for the local blues-rock band, Knot Today. He also enjoys fishing and water sports. Dan's duties, as Lieutenant, include station and equipment maintenance and responding to calls-for-service by the citizens of our district. Dan says, "I worked 23 years in a refinery and was familiar with some firefighting. WLLVFD was a way to continue that interest and give back to the community." The dedicated service of volunteers like Dan Mills make accomplishing the mission of the fire department possible.

YOUR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S ISO RATING

Our goal is to be a model rural volunteer fire department of exceptional quality as reflected in improved Insurance Service Office's (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) ratings. A district's ISO-PPC rating is generated by a national organization that evaluates a community's fire suppression systems to include its emergency communication capabilities, the department's firefighting tactics, training SOPs, administration and equipment, as well as its fire prevention efforts, and also the district's water supply system. In a narrow sense, a department's ISO-PPC rating is a measure of its firefighting effectiveness. From a wider perspective, it is a recognition of community service, of protecting the public and offering security, health and safety to its neighbors. Many rural volunteer fire departments have a PPC-10 rating since they do not have the ability to meet the fire risks in their areas. Well-functioning volunteer departments achieve PPC-9 to PPC-7 ratings. Full-time departments in cities with fire hydrants often are rated PPC-3 to PPC-2. The best rating, PPC-1, is truly exceptional and only some large metropolitan departments have attained this recognition. Our current rating is PPC-8b; our immediate goal is PPC-7; our distant goal is PPC-5. We have a detailed plan to reach those goals that include a water storage system and a new tender to shuttle firefighting water to fires. More on this five-year plan next time!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Fire Chief is Allen McWhirter (254-729-0165 ; amacfire@hotmail.com.)
 WLLVFD President is Kim McWhirter (rollingmranch@gmail.com.)
 ESD President is Vernon Davis (trmih2772@gmail.com.)
 e-Newsletter Editor is Paul Loeffler (wllvfdfire@gmail.com.)
Again, please share with your neighbors and email to wllvfdfire@gmail.com.

SUSTAINING MEMBER PROGRAM

A convenient way to manage your financial support through ongoing monthly payments to the WLLVFD.

Sustaining Membership helps us support efforts currently out of reach, such as:

A **scholarship program** to send Groesbeck High School students to Firefighting School and EMT Schools so that they can start careers with proper certifications.

A **new fire truck**, an attack engine needed for Station #3. Even with grant requests to state and federal agencies, a sizable matching component is required. The new pumper is needed to meet our ISO goal resulting in lower insurance premiums.

Paramedic and emergency medical response training at the respective schools so the WLLVFD members can better serve during medical emergencies.

New personal protective gear for our firefighters as "PPE" needs to be replaced every ten years as an ISO requirement.

We need your assistance and would welcome you as a Sustaining Member. Your regular monthly donation is appreciated. Please contact President Kim McWhirter.