

West Lake Limestone VFD

And

Emergency Services District #2

e-NEWSLETTER – 4TH QTR. DECEMBER 2021

NEW APPARATUS

We have acquired a 2010 Chevy Suburban to be used for the Medical Response Unit, which is equipped with all medical supplies needed, SCBA bottle, and will also be used as a Command Unit on fire and wreck scenes. It was purchased from Long Island, NY FD, and we are using it for the "first-out" unit, saving wear and tear on our 2507 Wildland Brush truck which was previously used as the "duty truck". Now 2507 will be reserved for when that apparatus is needed to fight fires.



We also received a 2011 Chevy Tahoe to be used for our Rehab Team. The Rehab Team is called out to fire scenes to watch out for the firefighters to ensure they are not overheating, and to provide water and medical attention as needed. At the same time that we received the Tahoe, we also received a 2007 Chevy Avalanche which we donated to the Thornton VFD. Both the Tahoe and Avalanche were donated from the West Lake FD in Katy, TX to whom we are most grateful!

STATION WINTERIZATION UPDATE

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we discovered after the big freeze that West Lake Limestone VFD is not given any priority by the electric company for power or repairs. The main station on 937 was without power for **11 days** in February of this year. The outlying stations were also without power resulting in the loss of an apparatus at station #3, as well as most of our equipment being frozen into station #1 and inaccessible.

As of now, stations 2 and 3 have been set up with propane heaters, and installation is in progress for a 20Kw generator at station 1 to be fueled by a 500-gallon propane tank. This will enable the station to be fully functional off-grid for up to two weeks, thus giving the VFD the ability to provide uninterrupted services and protect the equipment.

TRAINING UPDATE

All eight members who were taking the EMR Training successfully completed the course, and they are now signed up to take the final test to receive their National Certifications.



Twelve of our firefighters have begun training for their Wildland Firefighter certifications. The course is 32 hours of online training which will be followed by 8 hours of hands-on training to be completed locally at the Groesbeck VFD.

The third Saturday of both January and February at 9:00 AM, we will do medical training at Station 1 located at 6614 FM 937. January's training will be the classroom portion of the course, and February's training will be the hands-on ambulance familiarization. We encourage everyone who is interested to attend these trainings. Everyone is welcome to attend!

AWARDS BANQUET

We held our annual Awards Banquet Tuesday, December 7 at Joe Fridays in Mexia. Following are the members who earned top honors this year:

John "Peanut" Copeland Chief's Award
Austin Proctor Firefighter of the Year
Sherry Solis President's Award
Jeff Chavers Volunteer of the Year

Those receiving plaques for years of service:

Pat Mills 5 years
Carl Schrier 10 years
Carol Schrier 10 years
Sheryl Davis 15 years

Congratulations and thanks to all these fabulous folks for their dedication and service!

EMERGENCY CALL TOTALS

The information in the following table shows the number and percentage of the emergency calls we responded to between 10/1/2020 and 9/30/2021. Last year's call volume was 185 total, so 203 for this fiscal year is a significant increase. We expect this next year to be even busier as the population of our Emergency Service District is growing.

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range: Start Date: 10/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/21

MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	34	16.75%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	125	61.58%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	16	7.88%
Service Call	13	6.4%
Good Intent Call	13	6.4%
False Alarm & False Call	1	0.49%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	1	0.49%
TOTAL	203	100%

A NOTE FROM THE ESD PRESIDENT

We Commissioners extend a "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays" to everyone in the district. We should also add a heartfelt "Happy New Year."

This past year has been a year of challenge and change for the ESD, but it has also been one of tremendous progress.

February gave us "Snowid-21" or Winter Storm Uri, which identified a need to winterize our stations and presented the question of replacing frozen pumps or an entire fire engine. The Board committed significant reserve funds to provide propane heat in Stations-2 and Station-3, and to install a 20kw generator in Station-1; we are ready for this winter's cold snap!! Fortunately, the ESD maintains

replacement insurance coverage on its fleet of vehicles so that "Ol' Ladder-17," with its damaged components, could be replaced by a newer pumper that is now at Station-2. It will be the WLLVFD's second-out engine, thus significantly upgrading our fire and rescue response capabilities.

At the February ESD meeting's annual election, I was selected as President of the ESD#2 Board of Commissioners. Interestingly, this closely corresponded with the appointment in March, and subsequent election in June, of David Nobles as the Fire Chief. David was the Fire Chief of WLLVFD prior to the establishment of ESD#2. The Fire Chief is also a non-voting member of the ESD Board.

During the summer and fall there have been other changes in ESD leadership as we have had two vacancies and an expiring term. John Beall, who has his CPA and has been a CFO of a corporation, has become our Treasurer. Randy Behringer, with an extensive career in the insurance industry, has accepted the role of Vice President. Randy Denzer, who is currently the Battalion Chief with the Austin FD and who will be retiring to the lake in January, will join us as our fifth Commissioner. These talented individuals join Charlie Eastburn, our Secretary, and a former HR executive, and me, a retired university professor and department chairman, in providing the expertise and leadership skills to ensure a well-managed ESD.

At the ESD our role is to support the operations of the fire department using our financial resources to meet its needs. This is visibly reflected in the "new" vehicles that you may have seen around the district such as our Command Vehicle/Medical Response Unit and our Rehab Vehicle which serve to keep citizens and first responders safer during emergencies. Not so visible is our funding of extensive

training courses in Emergency Medical Response and Wildland Firefighting. Eight of the WLLVFD members have completed EMR training and will soon be standing for the national certification exam. Twelve WLLVFD firefighters are just starting training that will lead to Wildland Firefighter certification. Our VFD members are better trained than they have ever been. We encourage their efforts, we support them, and we are exceedingly proud of them!

Finally, the last change that I'll highlight is the 2% local sales tax initiative passed in May. This is essentially a commendation by the citizens of our district reflecting faith in those who serve at the ESD and WLLVFD. All of us thank you! We have a highly professional volunteer fire department that provides emergency services to the south county. In my opinion, it is the best in the county!! We are hoping that the additional funds derived from the collection of local sales taxes will help sustain the department. We need to replace the funds the ESD saved over the years to purchase the tender/tanker, which is scheduled to arrive early in 2022. These funds came out of the Apparatus Fund used to acquire "new" emergency response vehicles. These revenues will also augment the savings in the Facilities Fund used for improvements like the needed generator or a necessary expansion of a fire station.

As we reflect on 2021 it has been "a good year," and we are proud of what we have accomplished. We look forward to 2022 and are confident that it too will be another "good year" for all of us in our district. Please be safe and healthy during the holidays...and throughout the next year!!

--Paul Loeffler

A NOTE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

This year has flown by, we at WLLVFD have seen many changes this year. Our long time Chief Allen McWhirter retired, and I was elected to become the Chief. Quite large shoes to fill, let me tell ya. However, I've been in these shoes before.

We've had some changes in our officer ranks as well and I am excited to announce that I had the privilege of appointing our first female officer, Pat Mills! Throughout the year we have had several new additions, both in members and apparatus. As you may know, we lost our ladder truck in the freeze last year. We were able to purchase a 1997 International 1000-gallon engine to replace it. We have also added our Medical Response Unit to our fleet. It is a 2010 Chevy Suburban; it has been outfitted with a compliment of medical supplies and is used as our duty truck/command vehicle. This vehicle allows us to have quick response to medical calls and conduct a command function on fires and other significant scenes.

Last year's BIG FREEZE taught us some valuable lessons. We have taken several steps to "harden" our stations and equipment from the next event. We have installed propane heat at our outlying stations, this ensures that the apparatus is protected even without electricity. At our main station on 937, we are finishing up installing a 20Kw generator. This will ensure we are able to provide service to our community no matter the weather.

It has also been a very busy year for emergency calls, we had a record year for our call volume, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. In response to our growing population in our district, we have focused on training. We had several members attend EMR training and have several members currently working to obtain wildland firefighter certification. As you

can see by these few examples, we are staying committed to the community we serve. In looking ahead, next year forecasts to be just as busy, both in call volume and growth of the FD.

We are also now members of TIFMAS (Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System) which is maintained by Texas A&M Forest Service. The program includes grants, training and qualifications and mobilization systems to make statewide use of local resources. The program was first used during Hurricane Ike and has since been used in response such as to the Presidio flooding, wildfire outbreaks across Texas, and Hurricanes Alex & Harvey.

Lastly, we are always on the lookout for new members or opportunities. If you are up for the challenge and looking for ways to serve your community stop by 6614 FM 937 and see me about ways you can help. If you would like to schedule an event, meeting or have questions about outside burning, contact me at (254)729-0165.

Thank you for your support!

--David Nobles

HAPPY NEW YEAR

TO ONE AND ALL!!!

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