



Volente Fire Department
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Volente, TX 78641

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The News

From Your Volente
Fire Department



Go Vote

January 27th

4-7 pm

VFD Election
for
Board of Directors

And join us for the best
POTLUCK DINNER
in town!

Look inside for more information.





Volente Fire Department Newsletter

January 2012

EMERGENCIES: CALL 911

Controlled Burns: 258-1114
(permit required)

Fire Chief: Walter Groman

Address: 15406 FM 2769

Volente, TX 78641

Website: vfd.net

Board Meetings held Second Monday at 7:00 pm

2011 Year in Review

By **Walter Groman**, Fire Chief

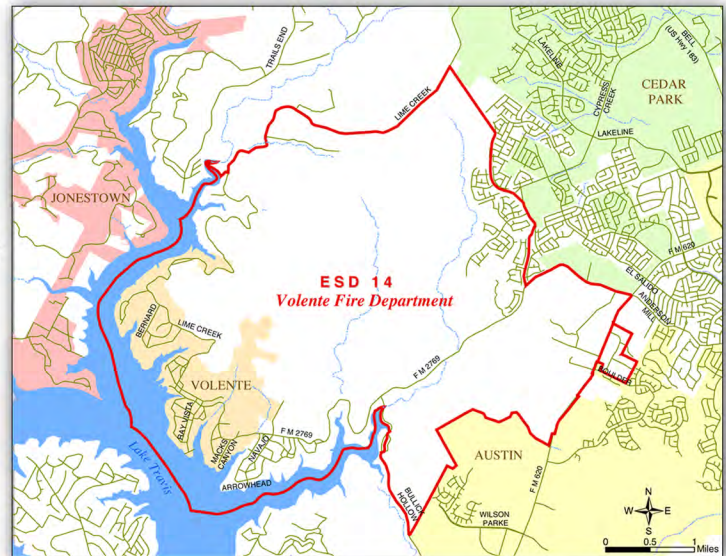


The members of the Volente Fire Department were very busy in 2011!

Our call volume for the year was up over 20%. This was caused in part by the additional response area that the Fire Department became responsible for in June.

Also, we responded to many of the large wild fires that Central Texas experienced. The fire service in Central Texas works together very closely to ensure that sufficient resources are available for these large and infrequent events. Although the Labor Day fires were significant, we were able to collectively respond to the fires.

In June we took over responsibility for the ESD's territory in the ETJ of Cedar Park. This area comprises Bella Vista, Twin Creeks and Deer Creek. In preparation for responding to this extended area, the Fire Department added a 3rd full time fire fighter to our staffing. This has allowed the Fire Department to ensure that more personnel arrive on scene to handle the emergency situation.



Our paid staff work 24 hours on and 48 hours off. We have at least three members on duty 24/7, 365 days a year. Our paid staff is supported by a number of community volunteers. These community members volunteer their time for fire suppression activities, EMS response, fund raising activities and public education.



In October 2011, we celebrated 50 years of service to the Volente community!

We had a great parade and Open House to commemorate this significant milestone. Thanks to all of the community members that attended. We had tremendous support from community members to underwrite our 50th Anniversary celebration.



We continue to seek grants to supplement the funding that is provided to operate the Fire Department from the Emergency Services District. These grants allow us to attend training programs that we would not normally be able to attend, as well as funding gear and equipment that our budget cannot normally support. Our volunteers and paid staff alike have spent the past year attending numerous training programs to enhance the level of services that the department is able to deliver. Classes include, haz mat, confined space, officer development. In 2011, we increased our level of EMS first response. We now are able to deliver EMT intermediate level of care. This care includes some advanced airway and first level drugs. This enhancement will be extremely beneficial on some medical calls when the transport unit has an extended response time.



VFD Election for Board of Directors



Election for the VFD Board of Directors will be held at the Fire Department on Friday, January 27th from 4 to 7 pm.

Currently, there are four seats open on the Board. The seats and candidates up for election are:

President Position

- **SCOTT SPURLIN** - I have lived in Volente for 15 years and served on the VFD board for the last 3 years. We have made significant progress with our Fire Department in the area of Personnel and Equipment. As we move forward we face significant challenges with our revenue base and our operational plan. I would like to continue working with the VFD Board, the ESD, and the citizens of our service area to put forth an operational plan that best meets the needs of our service area, while using our tax dollars efficiently.

Secretary Position

- **JENNIFER ZUFELT** - I have lived in Volente since 2000 and have been involved in many activities of the Volente Fire Dept. I have been a member of the Board for the past five years, three years of which I have been the Board Secretary. I look forward to serving another two years to assist in the future of the VVFD as we face the loss of parts of our coverage area and tax dollars supporting our department.

Member at Large Positions:

- **DON GREEN** - Is a volunteer Fire Fighter and has been with the VVFD since 2005.
- **VERONICA FREDERICK** - I am the President of the TC Bella Vista HOA and live in the ETJ area of ESD 14. I was also active on the ESD 14 Planning Committee in 2011 to identify and analyze various options for providing long term services to the district including emergency services to homes in Cedar Park ETJ. I look forward to being on the VVFD to assist with the future options for coverage of the ETJ area.
- **LINDA OLSON** - I am an Austin native who has been fortunate to be able to enjoy boating on Lake Travis and the Village of Volente for over 25 years. After retiring from the Texas Department of Transportation as Director of Letting Management with 38 years of service, I built my home on Booth Circle and moved in February 2008. I am enjoying every minute of it and would be honored to serve on the VVFD Board.
- **MIKE VANDENACK** - I have lived in Travis County for 35 + years and in Volente since 1997, originally from Green Bay Wisconsin. I am an undergraduate in art and presently have my own business in Volente. I have been a member of the VVFD for approx 13 years, serving as a Lieutenant for two years and a Board Member in 2005, 2006 and 2009. My goal for being a Board Member is to make the most cost effective use of our tax dollars for the Fire Dept and safety of our Community. I look forward to serving the VVFD in 2012.
- **JAN YENAWINE** - I joined the Volente Fire Dept in 1967. I served on the Volente Fire Dept board over the years in various positions including board president. I served as a ESD 14 Commissioner including President of the Commission. I was involved with the founding of state association of ESDs which brought all of the ESD Commissioners together to share common problems and provide the required education to be an effective ESD commissioner. I have served as Chief of the Volente Fire Dept. at various times starting as chief in 1972 and filling the position as needed during times of transition within the department. My experience as a ESD 14 commissioner provides me with the experience to represent all of the Volente Fire Dept residents. I am willing to provide the time and energy required to find the Volente Fire Dept's place in an ever changing emergency services system.

Thank You!



Thank you Ann Anderson!

Ann has served on the Fire Department Board for 8 years! Along with serving as a volunteer on the Fire Board she is active in the Volente Garden Club, The Volente Fire Department Auxiliary and her local church.

And active she is! She attends every meeting and is a contributing member, she shows up and serves for pancake breakfast, National Night out, Christmas decorations, and any other effort that is needed. She also loves to cook and makes sure our firemen don't go hungry while at the station. It has also been noted that a firetruck or two has been seen at her house on Thanksgiving-right about turkey time. I'm sure just a coincidence and probably just a routine inspection! Along with all of her volunteer activities she watches college and professional football and knows something about every team! Even though she has decided to not continue on the board she is still on the hook to drop in an bring her delicious brownies to our meetings! Thanks Ann! It's been wonderful having you on the board.

BALLOTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IF YOU ARE A PROPERTY OWNER WITHIN THE VVFD AREA OR A REGISTERED VOTER IN THE AREA. VOTERS MAY BE ASKED TO SHOW PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP BY PROVIDING EITHER A RECENT PROPERTY APPRAISAL NOTICE OR TAX BILL FROM TRAVIS COUNTY SHOWING VVFD SERVICE AREA ADDRESS OR CURRENT VOTER REGISTRATION CARD OR DRIVERS LICENSE WITH VVFD SERVICE ADDRESS. VOTING SHALL BE SECRET PAPER BALLOT. MEMBERS UNABLE TO ATTEND ON JANUARY 27TH MAY REQUEST A MAIL BALLOT BY CONTACTING elections@vffd.net

Following the election, a short annual meeting of the Volente Fire Department will be held to announce and introduce the Board Members. And then...

Join us
for Potluck!

Good Food!



All are Invited!!

Bring your best dish, enjoy lots of good food and visit with old and new friends! This is a great way to find out what's happening in Volente! The Auxiliary will furnish paper goods, plastic ware and drinks.



Annual Update From Your Fire Board

By **Scott Spurlin**, President, VFD Board



The year of the Wildfire!

The summer of 2011 has been one of the most challenging years in the history of firefighting in this state. Millions of acres of Texas land was burned, over 1800 homes lost, along with a few lives. The year started with fires in West Texas in the spring, and ended with the catastrophic fires that raged all around Volente in September.



To put this in perspective the second largest catastrophic fire in Texas history was the April 2011 Possum Kingdom fire, which burned 168 homes as reported by texas-fire.com. Fortunately Volente was spared. Our beautiful hills are covered with Junipers and native oak trees that would've been excellent fuel for a fire. Our unique community of winding lakefront and hillside roads pose a lot of challenges for a fire department. We have made significant progress towards providing the right operational equipment and personnel to meet our needs-but have more work to do.

Our Fire Department met the challenge head on and was a major contributor in fighting these fires. We can be proud of the role they played, and the impact they made. Early in the year we supplied personnel and equipment to aid in the west Texas fires. Our chief was asked to command a fire fighting task force that was made up of professional and volunteer fire fighters. All worked seamlessly to protect property and save lives.

Shortly after the West Texas fires there were fires in Leander, the Hamilton Pool Road area, and Northern Hays county that the Fire Department responded to. The department ranged far and wide to provide support for our neighboring fire departments.

When Labor Day rolled around the airwaves and newspapers were warning about the dry and windy conditions providing the perfect environment for wildfires. Our worst fears were realized as the reports started coming in: Bastrop county, Pedernales, Steiner Ranch, SW Austin, and Pflugerville all had major fires burning.



Our Fire Department had as many as four crews in action simultaneously. On September 4th we started in the morning with a crew in Pflugerville, then responded to the Pedernales fire, and finally the big one at Steiner Ranch. We were one of the first departments on scene at Steiner Ranch. What is even more amazing is that we had a fully staffed fire station ready to answer the next alarm if needed. While all of this was going on the Volente Beach Club was hosting an event of over 2,000 attendees to which we provide courtesy EMS support. This amazing response was performed by two shifts of our professional fire fighters and back filled by our volunteers! Next time you see our chief, the professional and volunteer fire fighters thank them-they deserve it. It was an incredible display of our uniquely American spirit at work!

In the aftermath of these fires a lot of questions and discussions have ensued. In a perfect world no property or lives would be lost. It is amazing that the human toll wasn't much worse, and to that we are all grateful. What can be done better? These questions are invoking many types of proposed solutions: county wide fire system, integration with Austin Fire Department, merger of ESD's, etc. Closer to home we have the challenge of losing revenues due to lower property valuations and annexation of some of the ETJ neighborhoods by Cedar Park. These challenges face our ESD board and will ultimately drive how the Volente Fire Department Board operates the fire department to service our geographic responsibility. To that end we are modeling the financial impact of these various scenarios. The good news is that we can retain our current staffing and personnel level for a couple more years. Looking forward to 2014 and beyond may present more challenges, all a function of Volente growth, Cedar Park growth, and the mission of the ESD's.

VFD Operational

In June of 2011 our Fire Department picked up the Cedar Park ETJ neighborhoods. This came about as the ESD decided to terminate the contract with the City of Cedar Park as the contract accelerators were rising at a rate that could not be sustained while maintaining equivalent service across our entire service area. In hindsight, this has become very political, and had the contract not been let in the first place, probably would never have been an issue. The Fire Department has serviced about the same number of calls as the CPFD has serviced, and with a comparable response time in the ETJ service area.

Over the last three years we have evolved into a 3 crew professional staff, along with gaining a few volunteers. This means that 24-7 we have three professional fire fighters, along with volunteers, that can respond to fires and emergencies in our area. Operationally this is very important, and a minimum level of required staffing, to perform such tasks as entering a burning structure to evacuate people, and to aid neighboring fire departments. We intend to do everything we can to maintain this level of staffing. Augmenting the professional fire fighters with fully trained volunteers continue to be of high importance. Our volunteers meet at least the minimum levels required by the state standards to support our professional staff. The Volunteers and professional fire fighters continually enhance their training, and we may have one of the best trained and experienced group of fire fighters in the state.

We have had no major equipment upgrades this year, but continue to invest in replacement gear and upgrading when we can. One example is the phasing in of the new AED, providing a higher rate of success with cardiac arrest victims requiring CPR. Another example is the computers on each of the fire trucks. If you've ever poked your head inside the cab of one of our engines, or other apparatus, you would swear we must be running the space program from the drivers, or passenger seat! This modern technology helps provide a faster response time with the right equipment on scene, saving lives and property. Our engines and other apparatus have a higher than average inventory of equipment on board to fight fires and save lives. We have adapters that allow us to connect to all of the different fire hydrant styles in the county, vehicle extraction equipment on many of the trucks, all of which makes us more valuable by having the right tool for the job on scene. This redundancy is extremely important when handling multiple calls in and out of our service area.

Later this year we intend to acquire a Mobile Gator like utility vehicle to provide improved capabilities for the more remote areas. We are unique in that we have tanker trucks and brush trucks to make up for the lack of fire hydrants. These types of apparatus were in high demand with this past summers' wildfires, and we will continue to improve this wildfire fighting and search and rescue capability with the addition of the gator.

Celebrating 50 Years

Many of you attended the 50th Anniversary Celebration this past October. The event was wonderful and many thanks to event chair Jennifer Zufelt. She even ordered up amazing weather! Jennifer and her team did a spectacular job! The parade was a chance for our residents to show off their collector cars, hot rod cars, boats, tractors, livestock, and float making skills. The stars of the parade, and the residents re-convened at the fire station to partake in excellent barbecue, see the unveiling of the commemorative stone plaque, and of course speech making by some of our original volunteers. Back in the day your Fire Department provided coverage from Oak Hill through Cedar Park. Originally our funds were raised through a 100% donation and the department was all volunteer's. We then evolved into a Rural Fire Department (RFD) that was able to get tax dollars for equipment, and now we are funded by the Emergency Systems District (ESD). We've come a long way in 50 years, and the contrast can be seen by looking at "Ole Red" on display in front of the station as compared to our two current engines. We are one of the earliest and oldest fire departments in Travis County, and one that you can be proud of!

Moving Forward

The current board consists of Gary Potts-VP, Jennifer Zufelt-Sec, Jeannie Shull-Treasurer, Ann Anderson-Member at Large(MAL), Linda Rogers-MAL, Mike Vandennack-MAL. After 8 years of service Ann Anderson has decided to not run for another term. Mike Vandennack, Jennifer Zufelt, and I are also running for re-election. Our Member at large candidates for the upcoming election are: Veronica Frederick, Don Green, Linda Olson, and Jan Yenawine. The new board will be tested, as we meet the challenges of the next several years including the renewal of our contract with the ESD. We will also need to understand and model the available operating capital, and fit our operations to that capital, while providing uniform service across the district and make our voice heard in regards to county and regional operating goals. The spectrum of operational management choices ranges from locally managed and operated fire departments to those that are centrally managed.

We look forward to these challenges and look forward to your support as we continue to evolve our fire department to fit our operational requirements to better serve and protect our community.

The VFD Auxiliary News

By Dorothy Wilhelm, President, VFD Auxiliary



The VFD Auxiliary Purpose:

Uphold and assist with social aims and objectives of VFD. Give financial support by holding fund raising events as necessary during the year.



Membership: Anyone of 18 or over with interest in welfare of the area and serving the purposes of the VFD Auxiliary.

Meetings: 7:00 pm each Second Wednesday at the Fire Hall (Sometimes meetings are cancelled in summer.)

Some of the activities of the Auxiliary are the annual Fish Fry and the Pancake Breakfast & Blood Drive. Auxiliary members assisted with the 50th Birthday Party for VFD and with National Night Out. Pot Luck dinners have been sponsored. Auxiliary members will be assisting with the upcoming election of officers of the Board of VFD. Activities not only help with finances, but also bring the community in contact with the activities of VFD.

Volente Fire Dept Auxiliary
It's a **FISH FRY!**

Annual Fish Fry - Fun Times!

Volente Fire Department
AUXILIARY

COME JOIN US!

Supporting Community Events!

VOLENTE FIRE DEPARTMENT
PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY
50 YEARS

Members are needed to help with the activities, to suggest activities and to be leaders within the Auxiliary.

Are you interested?

Come to our next meeting and see. You can contact Auxiliary President Dorothy Wilhelm at 258-1530.

Remember, this is Your Fire Department also.