

# Local VFDs need our support

Most of us have heard – and probably seen – the sirens of the trucks from the Boerne Fire Department as they leave their station on Main Street. BFD is a “hybrid” service, meaning its paid staff/operations are supplemented by the Boerne Volunteer Fire Department, with 15 volunteers currently (per its 2021 annual report).

BFD has the only paid fire service in the county, with 21 full-time employees covering three shifts (each shift works 24 hours on, 48 hours off). Through an inter-local agreement with Kendall County, BFD also provides fire protection and emergency services for an area of the county of about 190 acres outside the city limits.

Other areas of Kendall County (population 45,000) are covered by six volunteer fire departments – and these hard-working stations need your support.

The northwest portion of the county is served by the Comfort VFD and Alamo Springs VFD. The central and northern parts of the county are served by the Sisterdale and Waring VFDs. The eastern and southern sections are covered by the Kendalia and Berghheim VFDs. (A small part of south central Kendall is covered by the Leon Springs VFD.) All of these departments have agreements that allow them to come to each other’s aid when needed.

Some of the VFDs provide services to surrounding counties as well. For example, the Comfort VFD serves the southern part of Kerr County.

Many of these VFDs are also active in their local community, sponsoring activities such as emergency water distribution



during hot weather, smoke alarm distribution, participation in local parades, Fire Prevention Week activities at local schools and annual open houses.

In addition to protecting property and providing rescue/response for traffic accidents, VFDs are critical to fighting wildland fires. In January, 13 different agencies responded to a 76-acre brush fire near Voss Middle School, according to the Berghheim VFD website.

This massive undertaking used more than 35 fire apparatus and over 100 personnel. Since no fire hydrants exist in such areas, the firefighters must use tender (tanker) trucks to bring the water to the scene – and send the trucks back to a water source to refill if necessary.

A portion of the operating budget of the VFDs is provided by the counties which they serve. All of the VFDs accept tax-deductible donations to help further offset their operating costs. Many also host annual fundraisers, such as a fish fry. You can find information on how to donate on their respective websites, or call the station.

The Boerne Fire Department sponsors a Citizen’s Fire Academy each fall. I attended this fabulous, nine-week session in 2021 and thoroughly enjoyed it. I learned about fire behavior, vehicle

extraction, radio communications and dispatch and a lot more.

(Braver souls in my class climbed the ladder extended over the engine and station apron. I sheepishly watched from the ground.)

I even held a fire hose at it shot water (with a helpful firefighter providing support so I didn’t wind up on my rear end), and I discharged a fire extinguisher for the first time – and put out the flames!

I highly recommend the class for anyone interested in learning more about firefighting and how it works. You can find more information and an application for this fall’s academy on the BFD website.

Remember, due to the ongoing drought, the county burn ban is currently on. Please don’t toss cigarette butts out the car window or start outdoor fires. Avoid outdoor activities that may cause a spark or flame, like welding.

It’s also a good idea to remove dead vegetation from around your home. The burn ban will likely remain in effect until we receive significant rainfall.

To check the current status of the burn ban, visit the websites of the City of Boerne or Kendall County.

So next time you see your local firefighter, give him or her a word of thanks. And please consider making a donation to help them defray the costs of their operations.

Laura Bray is chair of the Kendall County Democratic Party.

