

BERGHEIM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

“Protecting Our Homes in the Hills”

FALL/WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER

Visit our website at bergheimvfd.org for the latest Bergheim VFD news!

To volunteer or donate, call (830)-336-2590 or check our website



ADDRESS FOR BERGHEIM VFD – NO CHANGE!
Bergheim VFD PO Box 4141 Bergheim, TX 78004

CALL 911 TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY

Bergheim Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) is dispatched through the Kendall County emergency system; therefore, **call 911 for all emergencies in our area.** The caller's address is used to determine which services are dispatched from which department.

ENGINE 33 IS OPERATIONAL!



Engine 33 with Fire Chief Adam Hawkins and Board President Jeff Hoffstadt

Bergheim VFD is pleased to announce that new Engine 33 is in service and in full operation. Engine 33 is being used as the first Engine out on fire and medical responses in the Bergheim area. With this being said, what do we use our other two Engines for? Bergheim VFD responds to many different types of calls. Different calls need different types of equipment. Engine 31 (which has been used for all first out medical and fire calls) is now being used as the first Engine out on all vehicle accidents and mutual aid calls. Engine 31 still has the full capability of fighting fires, but it also includes extrication tools (Jaws of Life) as well as vehicle stabilization equipment. All departments in Kendall County, as well as neighboring counties, have mutual aid agreements. These agreements are in place to assist when more manpower or fire trucks are needed. Engine 32 is currently operating as a reserve unit or second truck out when multiple calls happen at the same time. Engine 32 also has Jaws of Life as well as full fire fighting capabilities.

SAFETY TIP



Don't overload extension cords or outlets!

2020 FUNDRAISING

The “Power Up” Engine 33 virtual fundraising campaign continues from last year. Due to the challenges this year has brought, there will be no brick & mortar event for 2020. We continue to work towards our goal of \$250,000. The 2019 donation total was \$88,800 and, at the end of September 2020, an additional \$30,660 had been raised. Many thanks to all who contributed so far and all who submitted matching fund requests to their employers. Engine 33 arrived at the station in March 2020, has already seen “action” numerous times, and has improved our ability to serve our community.

We still need approximately **\$95,000** to meet our goal by the end of this year. If all of the property/home owners in our coverage area send in a donation, it can be done. As a volunteer fire department, we rely on the community to donate the funds to enable the department to keep up with the growth of the community and thus more emergency services calls (fires, medical, accidents).

How do you donate?

- Complete and mail the attached donation form with your donation to:
Bergheim VFD PO Box 4141 Bergheim TX 78004.
- Contributions in the form of cash or stocks are also welcomed; send a message through the “contact us” section of our website or email bergheimvfd@gvfc.com.

CHIEF’S REPORT

The Bergheim VFD is operating with 19 volunteer firefighters and 8 fire apparatus: 3 Engines, 2 Brush trucks, 1 Tender, 1 Squad vehicle, and 1 Command vehicle. The fire station houses one of the three fully staffed ambulance/EMS (Emergency Medical Service) units in Kendall County. The other two EMS units are in Boerne and Comfort. Even though the EMS is housed in Bergheim, the Unit does respond to the other areas of the county, meaning that it is not always at the station. **It is always recommended that you dial 911 for emergencies and not come directly to the station.** The Bergheim VFD responds with EMS to most of the medical calls in the area. Due to COVID-19, the Fire Department will stage outside a residence on certain types of calls to minimize the potential for exposure, unless needed for manpower. The Bergheim area was blessed with some wonderful rains in the August and September months. Since then we have been very dry, and grass is very tall and dry now. It is extremely important that you keep the grass areas around you house short. It is recommended that you keep at least a 50-foot distance around your house mowed and underbrush cleared around your trees. Don’t forget the defensive perimeter around your electrical boxes! Overgrown grass can cause fires!



MEET SOME OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

All of our firefighters are VOLUNTEERS! Some live in our area but most travel from outside of our coverage area. At present, we have **19** volunteers, ranging from high school to working full time, with and without families, to retired individuals. Many thanks to all the hours they spend training and responding to emergencies in our coverage area. Two of our hardworking volunteers are profiled below.

Sawyer Donowho: Sawyer started volunteering at age 17, while a Junior in High School. He has been extremely motivated to learn every aspect of firefighting and first responder duties since the beginning. At present, he is a sophomore at Texas A&M San Antonio as a Business Major. He is one of about 15% of our volunteer firefighters who are certified to drive every emergency vehicle at the Department. He put in the hours to obtain the specialty license to drive the big Engines! Additionally, he achieved his EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) Basic Certification this year.



Mason Dollarhide: Mason has been with the Department for three years and has accomplished a lot of training in that short time. He juggles family life, a fulltime job as a plumber in the local area, and volunteering. In 2019, Mason achieved his EMT Basic Certification and, in 2020, he achieved his basic Fire Certification. Both of those classes and hands-on training required numerous hours. We applaud his dedication.



As the weather gets colder and the holidays approach, be mindful of safety!

Ladders – use appropriate size, have a helper.

Use of fireplaces and space heaters – always monitor, turn off heaters when not at home, ensure fires are completely extinguished in fire places and outside grills/firepits.

Christmas trees – water daily, turn off lights when not home.

GET INVOLVED - SERVE ON THE BOARD

Did you know the Bergheim VFD Board consists of seven elected members from our community? Four Officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) are one-year terms. No individual can hold an Officer position until they have served in the Department actively for one year. No member of the Department can serve as President until they have been an Officer or Director for at least one year. The three Director positions are elected on a staggered schedule with one Director up for election each year. If you are interested, contact one of the Board Members for more information, attend a meeting or two, get involved and think about running for one of the positions. Please consider joining us!



**ANNUAL MEETING & HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
DECEMBER 10th, 2020 AT 7 PM**



Join us on Thursday, December 10th, at 7 pm for our Annual Meeting. We plan to meet in-person at the Fire Station for a short business meeting and an Open House. This meeting will include election of officers and directors. The candidates will be posted on the website in advance of the meeting. This is a great time to meet your Board Members and learn more about the Fire Department.

**** Please check our website for any last minute changes (i.e. meeting going virtual)****

GREETINGS FROM YOUR BOARD

We hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and healthy, as we move into the Fall season. It is hard to imagine how quickly this year has flown by. But in retrospect, that is normally how we perceive the passing of time. Normally? ----- What has been normal about 2020? Our once normal lifestyles have been interrupted as a result of the COVID-19 virus. Who would have predicted a year ago that facemasks would become an everyday accessory, stadiums and concert halls would be empty, restaurants would resort to curb side service, travel would be limited and airports would be virtually vacant. Even the weather has been anything but normal. We've had more named tropical storms this year than there are letters in the alphabet and they're still counting. Violent storms, wild fires, droughts, and record heat waves have plagued our nation. Not normal at all. The not-normal list far exceeds anyone's normal list. In this not-normal age of COVID-19, we should take time to recognize those workers who are making sure that we have essential goods and services. A strong shout out to workers all along the supply chain who ensure basic needs are met; to all of our first responders, Fire, EMS and Police, who are faithfully there for us in our time of need; to everyone in the medical community who ensure we are healthy and protected; to educators committed to academic instruction, virtual and in person; and to the researchers and scientists working to develop a vaccine that will minimize risk in the future. Through their tireless efforts we are able to co-exist with the coronavirus and begin to resume work and life, albeit in a "new normal".

The Bergheim VFD will continue to provide essential services to our community, and together we will prevail through these uncertain times.

Thank you for your support,

Jeff Hoffstadt, Board President

And from your Board:

Ken West	Vice-President	Lola Strause	Director
Nancy Arthur	Treasurer	Ben Pruet	Director
Paul Mebane	Secretary	Buddy Schuchardt	Director

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL OF \$250,000!

Mailing address: Bergheim VFD PO Box 4141 Bergheim TX 78004

We thank Matrix Printing Solutions, Inc. for donating printing of this newsletter.