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Pecan Grove MUD

THE NEW FIRE PLAN - HOW IT AFFECTS PECAN GROVE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

by Chuck Bertrand, President
PGVFD Board of Directors

When I was elected President of the Pecan Grove VFD, I had 2 goals: (1) get the VFD financial situation in good order, and (2) work with Pecan Grove MUD to prepare and approve a Fire Plan.

Last November everyone associated with Pecan Grove VFD (firefighters, volunteers, board members and friends) held their breath. Would voters approve the fire plan proposed by Pecan Grove MUD? When almost 90% of the District residents who voted said "yes", members of the fire department were ecstatic. I was thrilled that I was realizing one of the two goals I set. Former Fire Chief Larry Perry was thrilled and responded with "To me, that overwhelmingly positive vote confirmed that our 30-plus years of service to this community was recognized and appreciated." Fire Chief Joe Woolley added, "With this passage of the fire plan we will have the resources needed to make substantial improvements to the fire department." He continued, "For example, both of our fire stations are now open 24/7 and we have increased the number of paid firefighters from 2 to 3. If FBMUD 118 approves their fire plan in May, we will add a 4th firefighter [2 at each station]. And at long last we are able to pay our firefighters a competitive wage which will allow us to fill our duty roster with the well-qualified, trained people we need."

Kathy Golden, founding Fire Chief and VFD Board Member explains, "Many people don't realize how valuable the PGVFD's more than 30 volunteers are to our ability to protect the public. Many volunteers live in our neighborhood and are trained firefighters and medical first responders. They carry radios and can respond to calls for help, supporting and supplementing our paid staff. I am particularly pleased that with the passage of the fire plan we have resumed a former practice and budgeted \$18,000 in bonuses to be distributed to volunteers each

December in proportion to the number of calls they answer in a year."

The passage of the fire plan may also bring another benefit - lower homeowner insurance premiums through some insurance companies. At this time PGVFD has a rating of 3 from the Insurance Services Office (a rating of 1 is best on a scale of 1 to 10). With improved staffing and equipment maintenance made possible by increased, stable revenue, the VFD anticipates that it will apply for an improvement of its rating shortly.

In 2015 PGVFD responded to 652 calls. Of those calls, 21 involved a fire and a whopping 418 involved



a medical emergency. The balance of calls involved such things as lockouts, hazardous materials, false alarms, etc. The importance of fire fighters being trained in medical first response is obvious.

The creation of a Fire Plan to enable Pecan Grove MUD to collect a fire protection service fee from every resident has been an elusive personal goal for years. Distrust, suspicion of motives, personality conflicts and other factors made realization of the goal impossible. However, in January of 2015 a progressive PGMUD board, led by Board President Chad Howard, invited PGVFD to open discussions with the goal of crafting a contract to provide the basis for a Fire Plan. This invitation was accepted by PGVFD and after about 3 months of give and take discussions,

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Voting Information

The 2016 Director Election for Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District is May 7, 2016, Monday, April 25, 2016 through May 3, 2016. The complete list of early voting dates, locations and hours for voting as well as election day voting locations, will be posted on the District website www.pecangrovemud.com. Fort Bend County utilizes Voting Centers on election day which allows voters to vote at any of the voting locations on Saturday, May 7, 2016. For additional information on voting in Fort Bend County visit their website at www.fortbendcountyvotest.gov.

There are three (3) Director's positions up for election. To save money on the cost of the election, the District is contracting with Fort Bend County to hold a joint election. The estimated savings for the District contracting with Fort Bend County is approximately \$14,000.00. Early voting and election day voting in person is set by Fort Bend County during the designated dates and hours. Early voting dates are

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a contract was signed for the VFD to cover all the District except Pecan Lakes and the commercial properties on 359. The Pecan Lakes neighborhood leadership asked that they be covered by the City of Richmond and the District executed a separate contract with Richmond.

The fire protection agreement requires District residents to pay \$11.00 per month (\$11.22 for Pecan Lakes) via their monthly water bill. It should be noted that this rate compares favorably to what most municipal utility districts pay to nearby cities for fire protection. For example, the municipal utility districts in Greatwood pay the City of Sugar Land \$20.32 per residence and Long Meadow Farms Municipal Utility Districts pay the City of Richmond \$13.95 a month per residence.

The future of PGVFD looks bright indeed. The department plans to continue its tradition of service to the community including all the "extras" such as Santa's annual ride through the neighborhoods, the Fourth of July Five Miles My Way Fun-Run, fire watch at the fire works display and the Fireball Classic Golf tournament. Residents are reminded that fire station number one at 727 Pitts Road has two meeting rooms that community organizations may reserve for their meetings. In closing, thank you for your support of PGVFD - we exist to serve you.

Project Updates

Grove 4&5 and Plantation 4&5 Drainage Projects:

The drainage projects for the Grove and Plantation 4 & 5 are under way. These projects were always considered separate during the design phase of the projects, but the Board of Directors made a decision to combine the projects for schedule reasons. The budget for this also allowed for this to proceed combined. The Contractor has been working on the Grove sections, and a large portion of this is anticipated to be completed in April of this year. The Contractor will then begin the heavy portion of the work in the Plantation sections. There will still be continuous work in all sections throughout the remainder of the project. This project is scheduled to be substantially complete in October 2016.

Plantation 7 Drainage Project:

The MUD and the golf course are continuing discussions for land acquisition to be able to construct the necessary improvements for this project. Discussions remain positive and the Directors are continuing their work to settle this in a timely manner. The project is estimated to begin construction in the early summer months, with a completion date near the start of the new year.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements:

The construction on the improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) continues, but the Contractor has completed a large percentage of the work. The contract is scheduled to be completed August 2016. Once completed the WWTP will operate more efficiently than in the past and the District will save money on energy and operational usage.

Water Plant No. 2 Improvements:

The construction for the improvements at Water Plant No. 2 is complete, and many new improvements were made. All facilities were recoated, modifications inside the plant were made to allow for easier operation of the plant, and a new concrete fence replaced the old chain link fence.

Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Televising:

The MUD completed the cleaning and televising of Plantation Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and the Greens Section 1 and 2. The Engineer for the District is currently reviewing the televised sections to offer recommendations for necessary repairs on the system.

Development in the District

The Terrace at Pecan Grove is moving along very well. The builders closed on 1/2 of the lots in January of this year. Westin and Chesmar now have fully constructed and decorated model homes. A full-time salesperson and hostess for each homebuilder have been assigned to this community.

Westin has four spec homes under construction. They had their first sale of one of their spec homes on March 18th. Chesmar has three spec homes under construction. Their first sale was on March 22nd, for a dirt sale. Once the buyer has made all of their interior selections they will begin construction of the home. Additionally, we are getting a lot of traffic into the community which is very promising for the success of the community.

90% of the landscaping, fencing and monumentation is complete. There is still some landscaping that needs to be installed, a short section of fence along the north side of the community needs to be installed and stained and the monumentation need the final clean up and lighting.

We are very excited to see the continued growth of this community and watch as it becomes a beautiful addition to the Pecan Grove family of neighborhoods.

New Recycling Carts

The board has recently approved the delivery of recycling carts to each residence in the district. WCA will be delivering a 48 gallon recycling cart April



18th through April 29th. If you want to discard your old 10 gallon bin, put the old bin INSIDE the new cart for collection on the following recycling pick up day.

New PGMUD Website

We are pleased to announce that we have recently launched a new and improved website for Pecan Grove Municipal Utility District! The website has been updated with a fresh new look and user-friendly navigation to help residents locate information about the district more easily. On the site you will be able to read the agenda for upcoming board meetings, see previous meeting minutes, and find out information about all of the district's wonderful parks and services. It is also a great resource for information on community trash and recycling programs, water conservation and tax information.

A new feature of the website is the ability for residents to sign up for email alerts, allowing for email notifications to your desktop or mobile device with the latest news and updates. Please visit the website at PecanGroveMUD.com and click the link in the top right corner of the site to sign up. We hope you will take a moment to visit our new site and we welcome your feedback via the form on the bottom of the Contact page.