

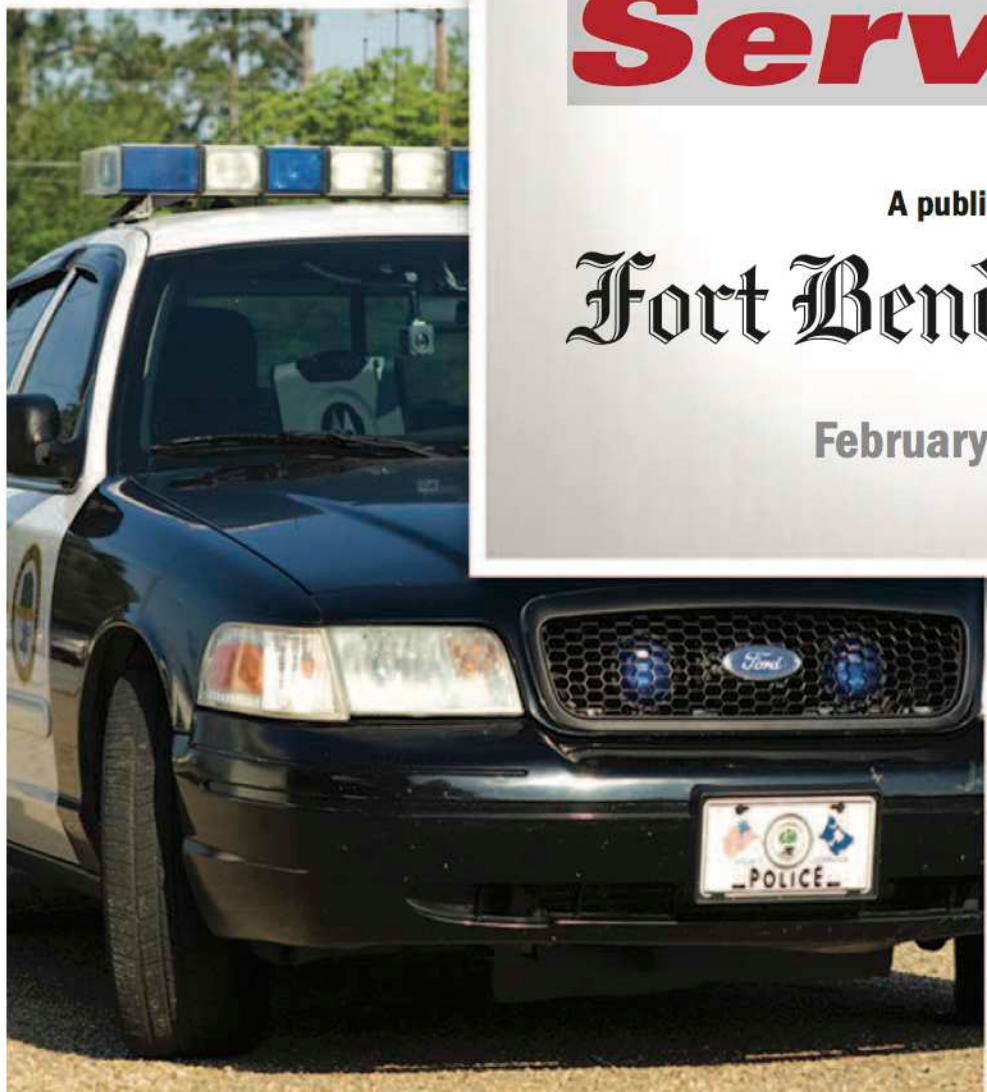


A Salute to Our Public Servants

A publication of

Fort Bend  **Herald**
AND TEXAS COASTER

February 24, 2017



An inside look at the Rosenberg Fire Department

BY AVERIL GLEASON

agleason@fbherald.com

Every fire station has its own personality. Or at least that's the way it is when it comes to the four fire stations in Rosenberg.

Forty-five firefighters make up the Rosenberg Fire Department, and they are split up into three shifts: A, B and C.

Rosenberg firefighters work 48 hours on and 96 hours off.

"When I started out, the shifts were 24/48," Captain Jeff Shumann said. "It's a lot nicer now."

Shumann has been with Fire Station 1 since 1990.

Cornelius Brooks and William Bryan are the other two firefighters on the A shift at Fire Station 1.

In the Station 1 bay are a fire engine, a booster truck for wildfires and a rescue boat.

Fire Station 1 was built in 1951. All the bunk beds and side tables were made by firefighters.

"These bunk beds have been here since before I was," Shumann said.

"Dang, they are old!" Brooks joked.

A sense of pride and camaraderie fills the air of each station. That's one thing that stays the same at each fire station in Rosenberg.

Fire Station 2 houses the ladder truck, hazardous materials trailer and squad truck, as well as a fire safety trailer for kids' activities.

Station 2 takes the medical calls, firefighter Manuel Padia said.

Eighty percent of all calls made to the fire department are medical calls.

Fire Station 2, about 50 years newer than

SEE FIREFIGHTERS, PAGE 3B



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON

"This is not what firefighters need to be eating!" Darwin Dobesh said before serving a piece of Coca Cola cake to Capt. Troy Svatek and Matthew Northup.



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Above, William Bryan, left, and Cornelius Brooks discuss who's getting top bunk at Fire Station 1.

At right, Connor Dick, the newest addition to the Rosenberg Fire Department, hurries to put his gear on before leaving Station 2. Manuel Padia is already in his bunker gear.



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FIREFIGHTERS: Rosenberg crews rely on teamwork, training to protect community



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON
Firefighter Manuel Padia puts on his equipment before leaving the station.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2B

Fire Station 1, is a little more modern than the other stations, according to Padia.

"This station has bunk rooms with one bed per room," Padia said. "Studies show that if a firefighter can get better quality sleep, then it makes for a more effective response when called upon."

While Station 2 is more modern than the first station built in Rosenberg, Fire Station 3 takes the cake.

"Station 3 is brand new, but it's kind of known for its state-of-the-art kitchen," A Shift Battalion Chief Justin White said.

Station 3 was built in 2014.

Captain Troy Svatek and firefighters Matthew Northup and Darwin Dobesh stood around the kitchen island, nibbling at a Coca-Cola cake made by Dobesh's wife.

"My wife is going to kill me," Dobesh said. "Firefighters should not be eating something as sweet as this. But it's just so good!"

Dobesh said that firefighters get calls for things as cliché as a cat stuck up a tree, or if someone burned his corn dog and didn't know who else to call.

"Being a firefighter is about showing up on the worst day of someone's life and making it better," Northup said. "We're there for you. We



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON
Battalion Chief Justin White begins explaining the difference between fire engines to Station 4 Shift A Fire Engineer Patrick Neal.

always will be."

White explained that every firefighter has his or her own talent, which helps make the perfect team.

"Everyone in the service has his own niche. We never stop training," White said.

In September, White and Dobesh became two out of 100 people in the world who are certified technical rescue specialists.

"The training we went through taught us how to keep a building from falling, and getting people out of buildings," White said. "Kind of like what happened on 9/11."

"Me and Dobesh wanted to hone our skills in the technical aspect."

The final station, Fire Station 4, also serves as the administration office.

The fire department outgrew its old building and moved to a new location in March 2016.

Fire Chief Wade Goates, Assistant Fire Chief Darrell Himly and Fire Marshal Justin Jurek all have their offices at Station 4.

Jurek takes care of plan reviews for incoming businesses, as well as remodels, looks over fire plans, sprinkler systems, acts as fire safety inspector and works with all city departments.

Station 4 engineer Patrick Neal said the fire department has a brotherhood like no other.

"We don't just take care of our city," White said. "We take care of each other."



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON
It's not always all fun and games at Fire Station 1, but when the firefighters get a break, they're joking around with each other.



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON
Rosenberg Battalion Chief Justin White shows fire engineer Patrick Neal the difference between the four fire stations on White's pull-out white board.

Richmond Fire Department welcomes its newest member

BY DIANA NGUYEN
dnguyen@fbherald.com

The Richmond Fire Department welcomes its newest member, Curtis Campbell, as the first-ever training division chief.

Campbell has previously served as an officer for the Sugar Land Police Department, and as a firefighter and assistant chief for the Missouri City Fire Department.

"I essentially started my career in 2000 here at the Richmond Fire Department," shared Campbell, "and I've worked with some other cities in Fort Bend County.

"They had a training chief [position open], which is a new position at the Richmond Fire Dept. I thought I'd be a good fit for it, went through the process and here I am. My last stop will be where I started."

Campbell noted that he's been public service for almost 17 years. He first realized his passion to be a firefighter as a young adult. "I found it was something that I enjoyed so I went out, explored it, and went to school for it," he said.

"Early on in my career, I've had some pretty good calls. We had some saves, and some crashes, auto-pedestrian accidents. Here, actually in Richmond, really kind of sealed the deal and made it known that what I'm doing is worthwhile."

As for his new duties as the division chief? "I'm over the training and education so I'm not assigned to an apparatus that runs the 9/11 calls," Campbell noted.

"We do all of the continuing education, the training, meeting company standards on new equipment, existing equipment, we do field training for new employees and we do the compliance for the regulatory authority with the state."

Campbell's favorite part, he shared, is "the interaction with the guys and teaching the newer fire fighters some of the skills you learn throughout your career to help them along the way."

Richmond Fire Chief Mike Youngblood said that he has worked with Campbell during his tenure with Missouri City and "am well aware of the work ethic and dedication that drives Curtis. Having him with us complements the great administrative staff we



Curtis Campbell

already have.

"Curtis brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to Richmond," he continued. "As

our department grows, someone solely dedicated to the oversight of training, safety, and compliance for our department is needed."

When asked what kind of advice Campbell would give to aspiring firefighters, he urged those interested "to go and join an explorer program.

"See what it is actually all about before you make the decision. Go out and get some exposure. Not so much experience, but exposure to the service to see if it's something that they enjoy."

Chief Campbell has a background in various disciplines of public service, such as firefighting, emergency medical, law enforcement, fire inspections, arson investigations, and was an instructor for many of those disciplines. His most recent position was Missouri City fire marshal.

In Campbell's spare time, he enjoys team roping with his two horses and dirtbiking with his daughters, 4 and 10.

To learn more about the Richmond Fire Department and the continued progress to improve services to all those who live, work, shop, and travel within response borders, visit www.richmondtx.gov.

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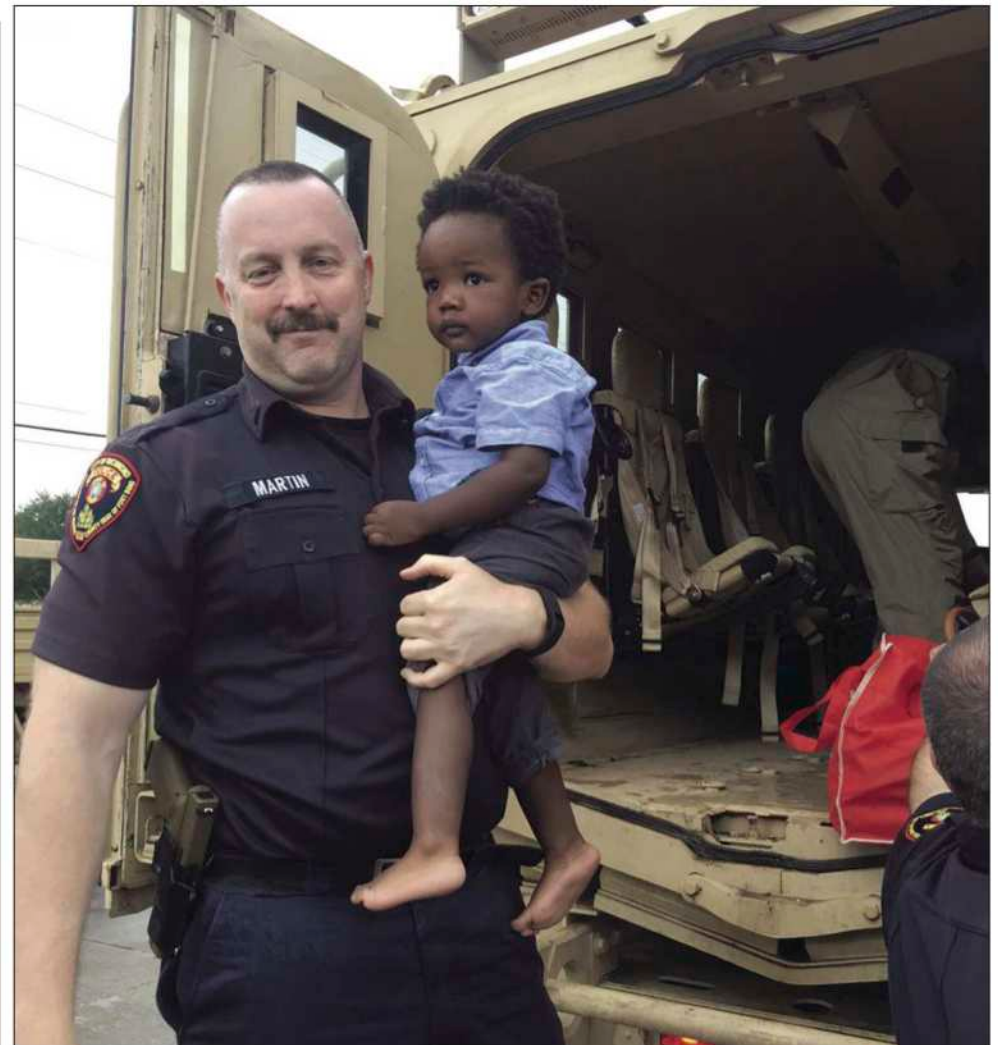


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT

Out of harm's way

Richmond police Lt. Jess Martin carrying a child out of the high water in River's Edge subdivision on Wednesday.

Coffee with a Cop helps bring Richmond community together

BY DIANA NGUYEN
dnguyen@fbherald.com

Despite the pouring rain showers and flooded streets, the Richmond Police Department's first-ever "Coffee with a Cop" was deemed a huge success.

Richmond citizens and law enforcement personnel gathered at Whataburger on a Wednesday morning to have a cup of hot coffee and a chance to get to know one another, ask questions and voice concerns in a relaxed setting.

Lt. Lowell D. Neinast, who had been working with Whataburger for the last couple of months to organize the event, said he was "very pleased" with the results and "couldn't have asked anything more, weather and all."

"It was perfect," he said. "You know, I thought about it on my way in. I thought [the weather] might dampen the event, but then I started thinking, what better weather to have coffee with a cop?"

Rosenberg resident Ricky Dike was in attendance at the Whataburger Wednesday morning, but it wasn't for the Coffee with a Cop event. He was filling out his application for work at the burger joint.

"I came to finish [my application] and I thought, 'Wow!'" he said. Dike ended up chatting with the Richmond PD representatives and became more familiar with the department and faces.

"They're real cool, all laid-back," he said. "It's a real good thing. It's good they see my face so hopefully, if I get pulled over, they'll be like, 'Man, get to work!'" he said with a laugh.

"They'll remember me and go, 'Man, are

you going to make me a double-meat today?' 'Oh yeah, I gotchu man.'"

Richmond City Hall even showed up, including Mayor Evalyn Moore, City Manager Terri Vela and City Attorney Gary Smith.

"It was a great turnout," said Vela. "I think it's a great environment to bring our citizens out to really get to know the officers and for the officers to get to know the citizens they serve."

"The response today was great. Coffee with a Cop has been around in different areas. I think Fort Bend County did one not too long ago, but this was our first one."

Smith noted the event is "a great way to put the police in contact with the citizens in a relaxed setting, not in the kind of unfortunate setting where police often meet the citizens where somebody's unhappy."

"It's a good way for them to get to know each other so they can communicate better."

Whataburger Director of Operations Ed Berg said he was impressed with the involvement the officers have with the citizens.

"We don't see that everywhere," he noted. "The officers take the time to sit down with the folks that come in here just to eat. It's wonderful. It's an impressively engaged group, that's for sure."

Coffee with a Cop is a national initiative supported by The United States Department of Justice-Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Similar events are being held across the country as local police departments strive to make lasting connections with the communities they serve. The program aims to advance the practice of community policing through improving relationships between police officers and community members one cup of coffee at a time.



HERALD PHOTO BY DIANA NGUYEN

Lifesaving Award

Richmond Police Chief Gary W. Adams, right, presents Officer James Williams with a Lifesaving Award and a Lifesaving Ribbon, which can be worn on the officer's uniform, at the Richmond City Commission meeting Monday. Officer Williams responded to a call on Jan. 16, when a man was lying in his driveway unresponsive. Officer Williams arrived to the scene and immediately began administering CPR on the victim. It appeared as though the victim had suffered a heart attack. Although the victim succumbed to his illness the following day, Officer Williams' actions enabled the family of the victim to have time with the victim before his death.

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We Salute Our Public Servants

Recruits help add depth to Richmond FD

BY DIANA NGUYEN

dnguyen@fbherald.com

Four recruits joined the Richmond Fire Department last fall.

The Richmond Fire Department welcomed four firefighter recruits to its team in early September: Tony Reeder, Kolby Lee, Jacob Winters, and Paxton Densmore.

"These new members of the fire department bring many talents that will help those who live, work, and travel within our response area," said Fire Chief Mike Youngblood. He noted his gratitude for all those who expressed interest in the department during the recent hiring process.

"Richmond is growing at a rapid pace, hiring and retaining quality public servants is a high priority, and we are working every day to meet the demands of a city on the move."

"When Richmond called me and offered me the job, I was jumping for joy," Reeder recalled Tuesday. "It was the first city I applied for and the department I wanted originally."

Lee felt the same. He had his eyes set on the Richmond Fire Department out of all the applications he had sent out. Once accepted, he said a huge sense of joy and relief passed through him.

Winters said he felt honored to have been given the job offer. "I say honored because there were a lot of candidates to choose from," he noted. "Becoming a firefighter is a very competitive process."

Winters first decided to become a firefighter at around the age of 15, when he watched a documentary on smoke jumpers.

"The profession stood out to me," he said. "Af-



Richmond Mayor Evalyn Moore formally swore in and introduced new firefighters, from left, Paxton Densmore, Jacob Winters, Antonio Reeder and Kolby Lee to the city of Richmond at a city commission meeting.

ter doing a little more research, I knew that being a structure firefighter would be better suited for me."

At age 15, Lee also became interested in the field after he joined his hometown volunteer fire department and fell in love with it.

"I left home out of high school to get my fire science degree through the fire academy," he said. Lee then joined the military, which he is still a part of today, "to better myself before starting my career."

For Reeder, his inspiration started at the age

of 17 when he witnessed a car fire that spread to a nearby house and saw the "firefighters work together to achieve one goal."

After years of training, Reeder graduated from TEEEX Fire Recruit class 149.

Reeder noted the process of becoming a firefighter is difficult without support from family members or information about how to become one.

Fortunately, Reeder said his family was supportive of his decision from the beginning. "My mom, dad and sister had a lot of faith in me to be

standing here where I am today," he said.

He shared the other firefighters and lieutenants on his shift are "great," and have already taught him "a lot of tips in such little of time."

"All the chiefs are passionate about this job," he said. "They have the knowledge, patience and skills that every firefighter should strive to want. They are great people with great intentions."

Lee said he looks forward to helping out the city and its residents.

Winters shared he looks forward to getting to know everyone in the department. "The people you work with is what makes the day to day that much more exciting," he said. "I believe that is applicable in any profession."

"Everyone has been really welcoming," Lee described. "From the top down everyone has made sure our needs have been met. The guys help by offering bits of knowledge here and there to help us become acclimated to Richmond's way of doing things."

As for advice for other aspiring firefighters?

"Chase it, don't give up," said Reeder. "During training, it is physically and mentally a struggle in some situations, but with heart and passion, you can get through any obstacle."

Winters shared the most important thing is "to do more and more research."

"I would ask anyone who is interested to come by the fire station and talk to the firemen," he said. "I feel most of us would be happy to answer any questions you may have."

"Work hard and don't stop," added Lee.

"Whenever someone tells you no, there is always someone who will tell you yes."



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Girls donate lemonade stand profits to fire department



Laney Fullick and Addison Flores sold lemonade by the Long Meadow Farms Recreation Center and pool, where they raised \$91. The girls then decided to donate the profits to the Richmond Fire Department.

BY DIANA NGUYEN
dnguyen@fbherald.com

It's not every day you hear about kids creating a lemonade stand and then donating their hard-earned profits to the Richmond Fire Department.

But that's exactly what fourth-graders Laney Fullick and Addison Flores did this past week.

The girls worked together and made lemonade with fresh mint, set up the stand at the Long Meadow Farms Recreation Center and made \$91, which they then told their mothers they wanted to donate to the fire department.

"I was very proud of the girls," said Laney's

mother, Andrea Fullick. "They both have such kind hearts and are so sweet. They are really growing up."

It all started one afternoon when the girls found some old wood and wanted to build a lemonade stand. It evolved from there.

"They wanted to give money to a good cause," said Andrea. "They kind of just brainstormed who they could donate to and they just came up with it."

"They talked about carving wood and making things to sell," added Addison's mother, Tami Flores. "Then in collaboration, both thought a lemonade stand was the best idea!"

SEE GIRLS, PAGE 8B

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Richmond firefighters, from left, David Helms, Bryan Lewis and Gino, enjoy lemonade from Laney Fullick, left, and Addison Flores, right, who built a lemonade stand out of wood, raised \$91, and donated the profits to the Richmond Fire Department.

GIRLS: Donate proceeds to Richmond FD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7B

"Addison has been asking for years to do a lemonade stand. She has a very personable and entrepreneurial spirit. She has always been intrigued by earning money in different ways.

"While I am sure she would have loved to find ways to spend the money, she was more interested in the sales aspect and creating the stand."

And the Richmond firefighters' reactions? "They acted very surprised and appreciative," Andrea said. "They were very sweet with the girls and enjoyed a cup of lemonade with them."

"The firefighters showed up in the truck and the girls could not have been more surprised!" added Tami. "[The girls] were so excited!

"The firefighters were treated to lemonade and

cookies and were told the donations were going to the Richmond Fire Department."

Tami, who couldn't witness the event due to work, said she was grateful for Andrea taking the time to let the girls have the lemonade stand.

"First, let me say Andrea was awesome!" she exclaimed. "I had to work that day so I had to live vicariously through their pictures!

"Andrea was key in voicing the option to donate. I know they talked about a couple options between the fire station or a cancer fund. Big kudos to Andrea for allowing them to do this and getting the word out for people to support them!"

And the girls don't plan on stopping.

Andrea pointed out that the girls would like to do something similar for the Fort Bend Sheriff's Department.

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Third annual 'Law Day' teaches students about law enforcement

BY DIANA NGUYEN
dnguyen@fbherald.com

Helicopter lift-offs, police officers galore, Richmond Fire Department, a U.S. Coast Guard, SWAT trucks and military working dogs.

All were part of what made up George Ranch High School's third annual "Law Day."

While some junior and senior students were busy taking their SATs, the rest were in for an educational treat on law enforcement, military equipment and criminal justice.

Fort Bend County and Houston police officers and response units, as well as other various law enforcement personnel, visited the campus to give students an insight into what they do and how they serve.

The idea of "Law Day" started with law enforcement teacher Claudia Urbina three years ago.

"When I was in high school, my principal would have this event for a week," Urbina stated. "We would meet judges, lawyers, federal and local agencies so we had the opportunity to see what they did."

"It wasn't just a cop in uniform, it was more than that. They would come out and bring a SWAT team... we had one year where they jumped out of a helicopter and there was a diving team."

"As somebody going into law enforcement, it gives you the opportunity to see the differ-



Houston police officer Shawn Demaree demonstrates the proper technique for placing handcuffs on a suspect. George Ranch High School freshman Dora Mendez played the role of the suspect during "Law Day."

ent types of not only agencies, but divisions of what they actually do.

"I wanted my [students] to experience that. If you're going to go law enforcement, you have the opportunity. If you want to stay local, stay local. There's state, and you have federal agencies that do so many different things."

Senior Israel Bernal, who has been a student of Urbina's for three years, said he enjoyed the annual event. He recounted a memory from last year's "Law Day."

"The Army came in and they had all this gear set up," Bernal recalled. "They had large uniforms, a bullet-proof vest and a helmet."

[The students] had to put it all on, run across the parking lot, take it all off, and they timed you for whoever had the best time.

"I couldn't beat the time but it was a lot of fun."

Bernal added that he also enjoyed this year's "Law Day" and described it as "a great outcome."

"There were a lot of officers and we had two helicopters come in," Bernal said. "Everybody got to see them take off, which was a lot of fun. There were two different SWAT trucks and they were showing off all the gear."

When asked if he wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement, Bernal said he did at first, but then realized it wasn't for him.

"At first I wanted to be a patrol officer or somebody in SWAT," Bernal noted.

"In the Law Enforcement club, I trained as a building search unit with a group of other teammates. So in a group of three, we would go through the hallways, clear the rooms and if we find suspects or evidence, we would back it up and call in dispatch just to simulate real-life. It was a lot of fun."

U.S. Coast Guard K-9 Unit Officer Steven Suhey attended "Law Day" for the first time and brought along his canine partner and military working dog Cappy, a 2-year-old black German Shepherd.

"We are part of the TSA program (Transportation Security Administration)," Suhey said in explaining his Coast Guard position.

Accelerant-detecting dog joins fire marshal's office

BY DIANA NGUYEN
DNGUYEN@FBHERALD.COM

The Fort Bend County Fire Marshal's Office has a new investigator on board.

Enter 2-year-old half-German Shepherd, half Belgian Malinois crossbreed, Bella, Fort Bend County's first-ever accelerant detection canine.

Bella has already been on scene for two fires within just one week. She helped determine the cause of fires at Victory Sports Cheer and Dance gymnasium in New Territory and at the Town & Country apartment complex in Richmond.

Lt. Steven McDonald, an investigator with the Fort Bend County Fire Marshal's office, began training with Bella since July at the Houston K9 Academy for five weeks, where she graduated

with honors on Aug. 18.

"There were about 15 dogs in the class, three accelerant dogs, one bomb dog and the rest were all narcotic dogs," McDonald described. "Some of the dogs there were grant dogs from K9s-4COPS."

Originally from Hungary, Bella came to the United States in May and listens to orders in the Hungarian language.

"All of her commands are in the Hungarian language which is interesting for me being from the piney woods of east Texas having to learn Hungarian," noted McDonald.

McDonald commands "ül" to have her sit, "ül le" for sit down and "fekszik" for lie down.

Fort Bend County Fire Marshal Mark V. Flatthouse added that the different language can be helpful when working on a scene.

"No one else knows the commands," he said.

"The last thing we need when trying to work a scene is if someone says, 'sit' and it throws the dog off."

Flatthouse pointed out that Bella is strictly McDonald's dog, who is fully responsible for her.

"The dog will be everywhere anytime he's in uniform for the most part, and we're going to utilize her on every fire scene that we or any of my staff respond to," he stated.

Flatthouse praised McDonald and Bella for their achievements during the Houston K9 Academy training.

"Steven won't say it, but out of all the dogs who graduated, Bella and him graduated with one of the highest honors in the class, even with coming into the program starting four weeks late. They were able to graduate at the same time. The two or three other arson dogs are still being worked on."



Fort Bend County Lt. Steven McDonald, with the county's first-ever accelerant detection canine, 2-year-old German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois mixed-breed Bella.

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Sheriff's Office offers welding course to inmates

A 10-week course in welding is being offered to inmates at the Fort Bend County Jail, the sheriff's office announced.

Twelve inmates will be in the first welding class, which is being taught by instructor Philip Manriquez from Wharton County Junior College.

A facility has been constructed and equipped for the program. Funding for the program comes from the Jail's Inmate Commissary Fund with no tax dollars spent.

In the past four years, the Sheriff's Office has initiated education opportunities including GED preparation, alterations and tailoring for female inmates, a computer literacy course, H-VAC training, In2Work from Aramark (food service operations), and now, welding.

"All of these courses are worthwhile and are intended to supply training in fields that will help inmates secure employment once they leave our jail," said Sheriff Troy E. Nehls.

"Of all the programs we have instituted, welding may be the standout course.

"When these men leave with this training in hand, they have an excellent opportunity to find employment."

Guests at the event announcing the new course included Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr. and John McGuff of Fort Bend County Facilities.



Attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Welding training facility at the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office included, from left, John McGuff, Fort Bend County Facilities; Lt. Jeff Kovar and Major Thomas Goodfellow; Richard Erivo, Inmate Vocational Administrator; Sheriff

Troy E. Nehls; Victor Manriquez of Wharton County Junior College; Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr.; and Captain Jule Brownfield and Deputy Gerald Wells of the Sheriff's Office.

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Herald photo by Diana Nguyen

Chief, officer honored for length of service

HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON

Tuesday was a big day for Rosenberg Police Officer Kelly Kreusch and Police Chief Dallis Warren. Kreusch celebrated 28 years of policing in Rosenberg and Warren celebrated 38 years at Rosenberg PD.

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Fort Bend County EMS: 'Always ready'



Fort Bend County EMS Battalion Chief Mike Mader takes a moment to reflect on all the work he does for the county.

By **Averil Gleason**
agleason@fbherald.com

Fort Bend County EMS Deputy Chief Jason Albert has been working for the county only since November, but said he has never felt closer with a group of men and women. "I've been an EMT since 1988," Albert said. "And one thing I like most about being in Fort Bend County is that everyone works together."

The EMS is split up into three sections — the north, west and east sides — and each section has three shifts — A, B and C shift.

The EMS operates 13 ambulances and three paramedic squad cars.

There are nearly 120 people who make up the field staff.

"Fort Bend is fortunate in having so many paramedics," Albert said.

EMTs and paramedics work 48 hours on and 96 hours off.

"It used to be 24/48," Battalion Chief Mike Mader said. "That left us restless. Now, we make sure everyone is well-rested."

"Dollar for dollar, it works out the same. And it leaves us much less anti-social."

Mader explained that the new shift schedule gives the EMTs and paramedics more time

to spend with their families.

"Working here has made me appreciate what I have and the time I have with my family," Paramedic Chris McGee said.

McGee has been with Fort Bend EMS since 2008.

"This is a thankless job," McGee said. "But when you do get thanked for what you do, it means a lot."

"We see people at their worst, at their most vulnerable, and it can weigh on you."

Albert said there is a clear sense of respect for the chain of command, but that does not compare to how much respect the public has for the paramedics.

"One thing I love about my job is helping people and having the ability to change lives one person at a time," Mader said.

Albert noted that the EMS takes pride in what it does.

"Everyone here is ready to lead or ready to follow," Albert said. "But in the end, it's not about who's in charge because we are all working together."

The EMS works hand-in-hand with police and fire departments.

"When we show up on a call, you can tell the cops care and the firefighters care, and that goes a long way," Mader said. "We have so many great people to work with."

Fort Bend County EMS Medic 13 partners with Richmond Fire Station No. 3

By **DIANA NGUYEN**
dnguyen@fbherald.com

The City of Richmond and Fort Bend County Emergency Medical Services have partnered to provide services with quicker response time to Richmond's increasing population in its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Richmond Fire Station #3 located at 11750 S. Mason Rd., built in 2008, welcomes its first EMS services, Medic 13, to their department.

"Medic 13 is being placed in service here in the Pecan Grove region of Fort Bend County," said Richmond Fire Department Deputy Chief Graig Temple.

"It's our goal to reduce our response time so we've been working very diligently for the past year. We've seen a significant increase of overall minute reduction in response time throughout the county and that's because we've been very particular about how we stage our units and how we post our units."

"We're looking to build a cohesive team among the Fort Bend EMS medics as well

as our firefighters," Richmond Fire Chief Mike Youngblood added. "That can only improve services in our area."

Temple explained the fire crew started the discussion eight months ago and identified a need of services more readily available, and found a solution in the new location.

"It's a great location for us to be able to assist the Pecan Grove area all the way up to [state highway] 99 as well as to offset some of our calls," Temple said. "What's interesting is Medic 6, which is in downtown Richmond, is our busiest unit of the entire county. So this unit is going to help take a lot of the calls that Medic 6 was typically assigned to and help reduce their call volume down slightly."

Temple noted the Fort Bend County commissioners supported the county EMS's budget this past year which allowed the department to hire the proper staffing levels in order to put the units in service.

He gave a special thanks to Chief Youngblood, County Judge Robert Hebert and the city commissioners for their support of EMS and allowing the firefighters to move forward.



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