

The Miller Grove Vol. Fire Dept. Newsletter

Vol. IV

November 2008

I would like to start this edition of our newsletter by saying, hopefully, the community of Miller Grove is about to come into the 21st century as far as firefighting goes. I hope everyone will take the time to fully read this newsletter. I feel it will be the most important letter and news I will ever send out to the community regarding the future of our Fire Department.

I have a lot of absolutely terrific news to share with the community so lets get started.

First, the last time I drove old Engine 13, it took me 150 feet past the entrance of the Station to get it to come to a stop. As I stated in our last newsletter, it was on its last leg. As many of you have already seen, we were able to purchase a beautiful 1991 Pierce Pumper with only 20,000 miles on it from the Fox River Grove Fire Dept. just North of Chicago, Illinois. After they saw our Station and equipment on our web-site they realized our Department needed help and made us the deal of the century on it. We purchased it for the price of \$32,000. After the flight to get it, the cost of fuel driving it back and doing all the necessary work of radio installation and other details that needed to be done to put it into service we have approx. \$36,000 into this apparatus. I will give you an idea of how good this deal was. We found the same model engine with the exception of it being a 1990 model with 66,000 miles on it and that company wanted \$76,000 for it. The reason I am bringing this up is because I want the community to understand that we realize how hard you work for your money and feel it is our responsibility in trying to stretch every donation and fund raiser dollar to provide our community with the very best return for the money.

Second, I just received a letter from the Texas Forest Service that The Miller Grove Fire Dept. was just awarded a grant for \$155,000 for the purchase of a brand new Tanker at the Sept. 2008 TFS board meeting. We will be responsible for paying 10% of the cost of this tanker. The importance of this Tanker, as most of you know, is the fact that we don't have fire hydrants in the Miller Grove community and we are normally limited to the 500 gallons of water that we have in the tanks. This new Tanker will have

the capability of pulling up at a fire and providing 2,000 - 3,000 gallons of water instantly. This Tanker will be a combination Tanker/Pumper so it will be able to make fire attack along with the new Engine 13 when needed. The other important reason for this Tanker is because it will now allow us to lower the ISO rating in our area and save our citizens hundreds of dollars on your home owner's insurance premiums every year. That is the importance of this Tanker.

Third, we have now accrued a parcel of land, about 500 feet north of the school and across from the Community Center, to build the new Station on. It is approx. 1.8 acres on 275 South and will provide all the room needed for the Fire Dept. to grow for the next 50 years. We are going to try and build a 50 x 70 station that will allow for the department to grow for the next 50 years without any further improvements. I am working with Guaranty Bond Bank in Sulphur Springs on a loan to build the new Station. The price of steel and concrete, as we all know has gone sky high. We are hoping that we will be able to build the new Station for about \$100,000. It will depend on how much of the work we can get donated and discount on materials, etc. If you are an electrician or have the skills to do any of the work on the station or even have ideas that would help, please contact me at 903-348-7525. I would be more than glad to hear them. I personally want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Jim Potts for their kindness and civic-minded concern. Many know that Jim Potts is on the School Board and the Water Board. I understand that these positions represent positions of community service. However, when Jim found that we needed to move the Station and that we were having no luck in procuring land, they stepped up to the plate and offered us an absolute perfect piece of property. He sold us that property at what he had into it, which was about 1/4 of what that property was worth. I have always noticed that Jim always looks for what is best for the community and his help, just once again, shows him as a pillar of his community and a man of great character. I just hope he doesn't take me to task for writing this. I know Jim didn't do this for a pat on the back or any other reason except to help. I just feel people should be recognized for going above and beyond for their community. Again, thank you Jim!!!

I now guess many of you are wondering how the department is going to pay for all this.

To start off with, the Pierce Engine 13 that we just purchased is paid for in full. Our past donation letters and Car Shows for the last 3 years have paid

for the Engine in full and the Hamaltro Extrication Tool (Jaws-of-Life) we purchased 2 years ago. Between our Donation letter and our Annual Car Show, the Department normally brings in between \$15,000 - \$20,000. It is with the hope of that continued support that we are going to move forward with these projects. We are going to take a 15 year loan out for the station. At some point you have to go out on a limb and I and the members feel now is the time.

As far as for the Tanker Grant, when we originally conceived our donation letter, we were going to send it out twice a year but we felt that we might be overburdening the community, so, we voted to only do it once a year. However, considering the fact that we now have the chance to have the state of Texas pay for 90% of a new Tanker that we have waited 4 years to accrue, we felt it necessary to step forward and ask our community to help with the other 10%. This is the first time that the State has ever offered to help us with such an apparatus in the history of the department, With the way things are getting, I do not foresee them doing it again in the near future. If we do not formally accept this Tanker within 14 days, in writing, we will lose the Tanker. Again, for this reason, we are sending this second donation letter out for the year of 2008 asking for the communities help. Again, these things aren't toys for us to play with. They are necessary equipment to provide quality fire and EMS services that we all deserve and want for our families to have should, god forbid, something happen to one of them.

Our portion of the Tanker will be \$15,550. We need to raise this money through this newsletter. Now, I am going to tell you the importance of this Tanker and why we should take advantage of this Grant. As I stated earlier, by us acquiring this Tanker, we should now be able to lower our ISO rating to an 8. The Miller Grove area is currently rated at ISO 10. This is the highest rate of insurance charged. Less than 2% of the United States pays the ISO 10 rate and our community is one of them. This is mainly due in to the fact that we do not have hydrants in our area and the fact we didn't have a modern Triple-Combination Pumper. Well, we now have the Pumper, Engine 13. This Tanker will now enable us to provide a Fire flow of 250 gallons per minute for a period of 15 minutes which will allow us to move down to an ISO 8 rating. This new rating in my research will save each homeowner \$200 - \$300 a year on your insurance premiums. Again, the only way our rating will ever change is by making this move. Now you can call me crazy, but, if given the choice to give part of my insurance premiums to

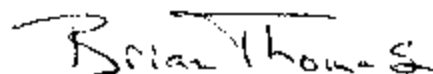
the Fire Dept. and get better emergency services and those better services will save me, in annual insurance premiums, the amount that I donated, I'd rather get the services and give the money to the Fire Dept. than I would the insurance companies. This is exactly what your donation dollars and the improvement of the Department is doing for each of you.

This is not some scheme I've dreamed up. This is the way the system works. It is my plan to try to finish the Station by the end of November. We will have a Grand Opening of the Station with a hamburger dinner for the Community, paid for out of the pockets of the volunteers. At his Grand Opening we intend to have a Community meeting to educate our community on how the Insurance Services Organization works and how you we can save you money on your premiums by diverting it to the Fire Department in donations. In essence we are going to educate you on how to donate to the department without costing you any further money then you are already paying out. Is this not a win-win or what?

I know that some of you have just recently sent in your donations. Again, we are asking your help by sending your donations to The Miller Grove Vol. Fire Department. The department, at this very moment, absolutely has the chance to grow in a way that will carry us forward for the next 50 years. These new pieces of apparatus will carry us for the next 20-25 years. The community has a chance to improve its emergency services, at this time, to a point that we will have never seen in the history of Miller Grove. The department has made absolutely incredible strides that are unprecedented over the last year. Those changes have come from a lot of hard work by caring people that want to improve the lives of those in our community. We need your help to see it through. This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity for the community.

I hope we can all see it through together for the betterment of our community.

Chief Brian Thomas,



Miller Grove Vol. Fire Dept.

P.S. Times are exciting and we need volunteers to help with this growth!