



# **BERGHEIM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

*"Protecting Our Homes in the Hills"*

## **SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER**

*Visit our website at [bergheimvfd.org](http://bergheimvfd.org) for the latest BVFD news!*

*To volunteer or donate call (830) 336-4485 or email [board@bergheimvfd.org](mailto:board@bergheimvfd.org)*

### **CALL 911 TO REPORT A FIRE !**

There has been some confusion as to what emergency number should be called to report a fire. Bergheim VFD is dispatched through the Kendall County system; therefore, 911 should be called for all emergencies in our area. When a call is made to 911, the caller's address is used to determine which emergency services are to be dispatched and from which department. Although the dispatcher has area maps, there are new homes, and in some cases new streets, so it helps to give as specific information about your location as possible.

### **SAVE THE DATE: ANHALT BARBEQUE & AUCTION SCHEDULED FOR SEPT 25**

Put the evening of Saturday, September 25, on your calendars for our Fourth Annual BVFD Barbeque, Dance & Auction Fundraiser at Anhalt. Come enjoy a meal, the music, and multiple auctions to support your local fire fighters. A newsletter will be in the mail during the summer detailing this year's plans.

### **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT** from Chief Jeff Hoffstadt

Bergheim VFD continues to grow: we now have 19 fire fighters, and several junior members, who have devoted their time and efforts towards bettering our community. We officially went into service on June 1, 2009; that was also the day of our first response to a brush fire. Since that date, we have been summoned 113 times to respond to emergency incidents in our area. Our response area covers over 51 square miles and includes 16 subdivisions, not to mention the Highway 46 and FM 3155 corridors. Our volunteers are meeting every Tuesday evening to train and expand their knowledge base; since June 1, 2009, we have logged 53 training sessions that resulted in 1525 hours of training! No doubt, our volunteers are dedicated to "protecting our homes in the hills".

Our new brush truck is now in service, providing our volunteers the capacity to deliver an attack on any brush fire, in almost any kind of terrain, with just two fire fighters onboard. Additionally, we just ordered a 1250 gallon pumper/tanker which is scheduled to be delivered this summer. With this additional truck, our capacity is further enhanced. This recent purchase will give our department a total of four vehicles in which to respond to an emergency.

Your generous donations of equipment and money are providing us with the tools we need in order to better serve you. We are deeply grateful. As we continue to grow, we are striving to be better prepared to respond to the community needs. We have a bright future and a dedicated work force. Thank you for everything you do to make our community a safer place to live.

### **MONTHLY PRIORITY NEEDS**

We continually seek funding through donations, grants, fund raisers and loans to help purchase much needed items. We now have taken out \$300,000 in

loans to purchase the two new trucks, and your donations help pay off these loans.

Our important equipment needs continue, and you can directly help us purchase items. Chief Hoffstadt has begun designating a number of urgently needed items as "Monthly Priority Needs", and we are asking specific donations from those in the community to purchase these items for the Department.

For instance, the January Priority Needs were two Backboards with Straps used to immobilize a patient to prevent further injury or for transport. The **Kendall Woods Homeowners' Association** has donated funds for one of the Backboards. The February Priority Needs were two Firefighting "Indian Packs", 5-gallon backpack water dispensing units used to drown "hot spots" encountered during a brush fire. **Mike and Cathy Spell** donated one Indian Pack, and **Janette and David Reamer** donated the other in honor of **Marti and Karl Gebert**.

The following Priority Needs are awaiting donations for purchasing. Contact J. W. Pieper at 830-336-3241 if you would like to donate to purchase any of these items for the Department. Donations can also be in the form of a memorial or in honor of an individual or group. The full Priority Needs list is published on the BVFD website, [www.BergheimVFD.org](http://www.BergheimVFD.org). All donations are tax deductible.

	ITEM	QTY	COST	DESCRIPTION
March	Portable ABC Fire Extinguisher	1	\$300	A portable ABC extinguisher will put out all classes of fires and is often more efficient at extinguishing certain fires than spraying water on the flames.
April	Firefighter Coveralls	10	\$140/pair	These garments are made of flame retardant material and protect the fire fighter from hot embers and ash.
May	Firefighter Gloves	10	\$55/pair	These gloves are a part of a firefighter's bunker gear and are essential for protecting a fire fighter's hands from hot materials.
June	Chain Saw	1	\$300-500	Chain saws are for everything from cutting limbs and branches to cutting holes in wooden rooftops.
July	Smoke Ejector Fan	1	\$700	These fans are used to exhaust smoke and heat from a structure to help improve visibility and reduce heat.

#### FIRE STATION USE

Any groups (see requirements below) in our local area interested in scheduling a meeting/event at the fire station should contact T. J. Garcia, our new Building Manager at email [TJGarcia49@gvtc.com](mailto:TJGarcia49@gvtc.com). The fire station may be used by non-profit, educational, and community-service groups, or home/property owner associations, whose purpose is to provide information to the local community. The fire station is not available for private social gatherings, for non-fire department money raising, commercial purposes, for religious services or ceremonies, or for the benefit of private individuals or commercial concerns.

Our goal, to use the facility for civic and community events, has received many positive responses. Several Property Owner Associations have held their meetings at the fire station. It has also served as a voting location, scout troop and nature club meeting place, a flu shot clinic, a place for school board debates, and, more recently, a BVFD taco breakfast fund raiser.

**ANDREAS ENGEL - BEFORE BERGHEIM** By Bryden Moon

Many of you know that Andreas Engel was the founder of Bergheim: a status conferred on him when he petitioned for a post office. His name of Bergheim, German for *Home in the Hills*, was accepted along with his postal commission in 1901. What many might not know is that the handsome rock store, established in 1903, was not his first. In 1890, he obtained land from Casper Sueltenfuss, which was located 5 miles north of Bergheim and situated on the Guadalupe River, and here is where he lived for ten years. His son, Alfred, wrote that he really settled in after he married Eva Bechtold in 1891, *"...moved to their home on the Guadalupe. Soon after this Andreas built a two-room store about half way between the river and the top of the hill."* His barn (picture right) is the only building left from his old Guadalupe site. Yet anchored on one end is a sturdy rock room, with a second floor. Could this be the two-room store? Several speculate it is. Why is this barn the only structure left? During the early 1960s a fire broke out in the old Engel house. Without the assistance of a volunteer fire department, the area neighbors who gathered were helpless to do much.



**MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD PRESIDENT**

Now that the New Year is well upon us, we have been blessed with ample rains that have highly reduced the risk of brush fires in and around our Hill Country community. Those of you who are long time residents, as well those who are new to our community, have witnessed how Mother Nature can deal out a variety of weather conditions. For that reason our volunteer fire fighters must be ready and equipped to respond in any kind of weather or emergency. It is our commitment to always provide the proper resources and high levels of training so as to ensure peace of mind to all the members of our community.

As a Board we have worked to oversee the early development of this fine department. Our officers and directors have given of themselves for a cause that has now become a reality in our community. Our continued commitment as a Board is to establish a clear direction into the future that makes our department a pivotal asset in this area. For that reason, the following committees have been created:

- Building Facility Manager, responsible for scheduling and maintenance
- Community Coordinator Chair, responsible for sending information to subdivisions covered by BVFD
- Public Relations Chair, responsible for keeping the general public informed
- Grounds and Landscaping Chair, responsible for landscaping the property
- Grant Research Chair, who searches for financial resources
- Fund Raising Chair, who gathers community support for events

We hope you concur with this vital plan and invite you to share your thoughts and comments with us. Meanwhile, don't hesitate to drop by and visit the facility to learn how to become more involved with your Bergheim VFD.

Thank you for your support,

**Tom Laurin,** Board President

And from your Board:

Ken West	Vice-President	Stanley Jones	Director
J.W. Pieper	Treasurer	Nalga Mebane	Director
Dave Kibler	Secretary	Bryden Moon	
Director			

