



# Matagorda Volunteer Fire Department

673 Market St.  
PO BOX 70  
Matagorda, Texas 77457

## 2018 Chief's Report

2018 has been a very busy year for the Matagorda Volunteer Fire Department. In 2017, our fire department responded to 109 calls for service. In 2018, the department responded to 146 calls for service, a 34% increase over the previous year. Medical assist calls accounted entirely for the increase over 2017.

In the beginning of 2018 the department fought some of the worst grass fires we have seen in years, but continued rains limited the number of wildfires that the department fought later in the year. The rain has created a dense fuel load in the fields that may lead to a tough wildfire season in 2019. If it ever stops raining.

Here are some highlights from our calls. In 2018 our department:

- fought approximately 5,030 acres of wildland fire at a cost to our community of over \$11k.
- saved 5 homes from wildland fire.
- responded to 5 fatalities.
- performed CPR on 3 patients.
- had 2 of our First Responders assaulted.
- responded to two drowning calls with 9 total patients.
- responded to 7 calls outside our primary service area to assist other fire departments.
- Performed 1 miracle.

Over the past year our small team of first responders has improved our proficiency and teamwork on all types of evolutions. Our First Responders receive regular training and coaching from Paramedics in our department. Predictably, the quality of care the department provides has significantly improved over the last year. Many of our members gained a significant amount of experience on both fire and medical assist calls in 2018.

In addition to all the calls for service, our volunteers spent countless hours in 2018 training, repairing vehicles & buildings, planning and executing events and managing Fireman's Hall.

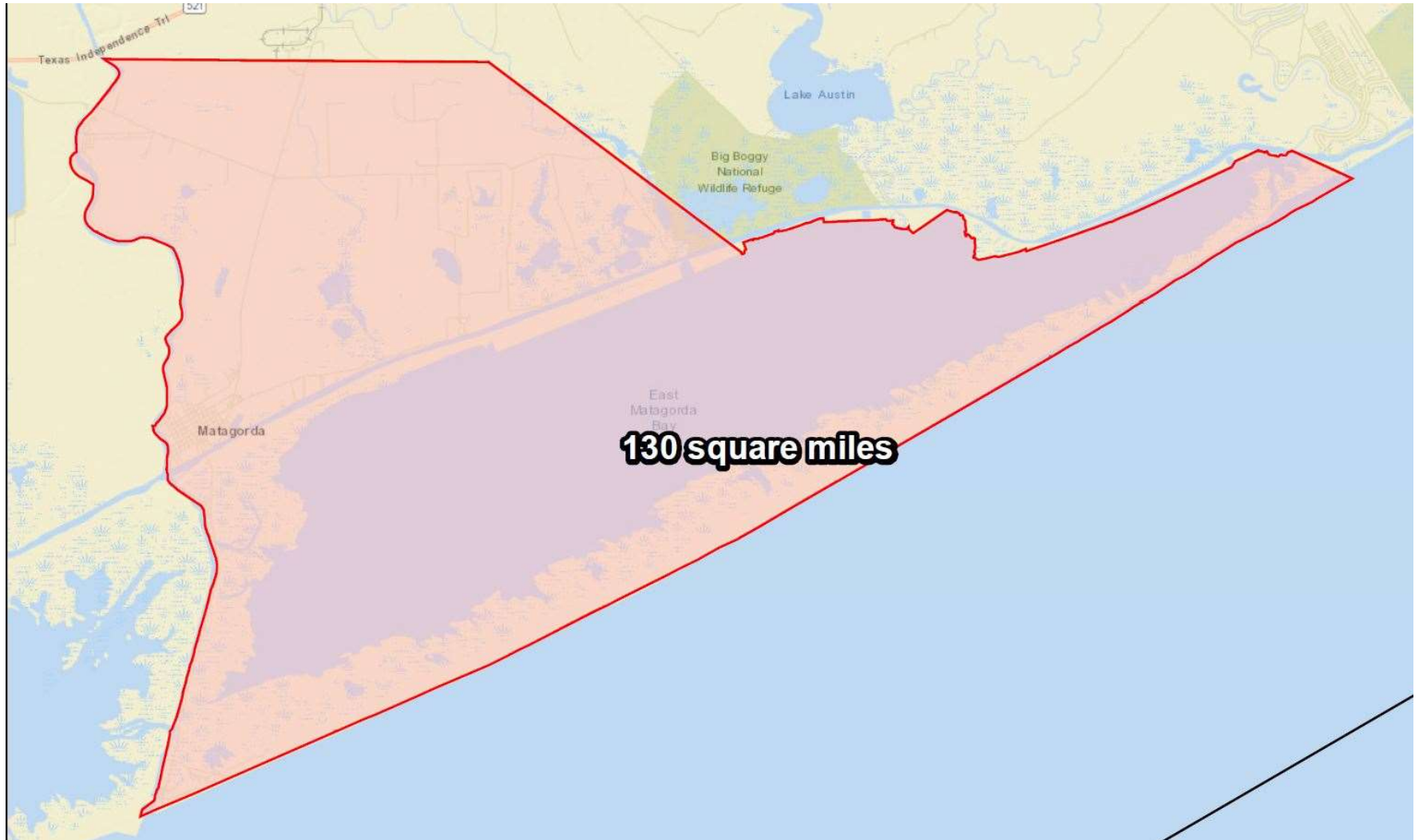
We received considerable help from the Matagorda Chamber of Commerce, LyondellBasell, Coastal Que, as well as other businesses and volunteers in planning and executing the Matagorda Day fundraiser.



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## Service Area





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## 2018 Call Statistics

Total Calls 2018	146	% Total Call Volume
Medical Assist	101	69.18%
Motor Vehicle Accidents	6	4.11%
Structure Fires	6	4.11%
Vehicle/Boat Fires	2	1.37%
Grass/Brush Fires	24	16.44%
Public Assistance	7	4.79%

Number of Calls by First Responder								
First Responder	# Calls	% Total Calls	Medical	MVA	Structure Fires	Vehicle Fires	Grass Fires	Public Assistance
525	42	28.77%	26	4	2	2	7	1
526	60	41.10%	42	3	3	2	8	2
527	15	10.27%	5	2	2	0	5	1
528	108	73.97%	69	4	6	2	21	6
529	80	54.79%	47	4	6	2	16	5
530	47	32.19%	21	4	3	1	14	4
534	6	4.11%	1	1	0	0	4	0
553	20	13.70%	4	0	3	0	11	2
554	6	4.11%	1	0	1	1	3	0
555	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0



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## 2019 Goals & Priorities

### Replace One Grass Truck

Currently the fire department has two military Humvees and an F350 set up as grass trucks. The Humvees do not have modern safety features, cannot be driven in the rain, beat up our firefighters, and tend to break down almost every time they go to a fire. Our first priority this year is to replace one of these Humvees as soon as possible. This will give our department two modern and reliable grass trucks which is the minimum we need to fight small to medium size grass fires. This truck will be based on a 4x4 F350 chassis with aluminum flatbed, off-road tires and will utilize the newest skid unit the department purchased last year. This will create a very lightweight attack truck with the minimum features we need at a much lower cost than a production or custom grass truck. The planned budget for this vehicle is \$53,000. The fire department currently has \$23,000 in savings allocated to this project so we need to raise an additional \$30,000 through grants and/or donations.

The other Humvee will likely be replaced in a few years when we hope to get a \$100k grant for a new higher capacity custom brush truck. The application for that grant was submitted over a year ago and we are a few years down the waiting list. The budget for that truck will likely be between \$135k-\$150k with \$100K coming from the Texas Forest Service grant.

### Recruiting

In order to respond to the growing number of calls, the department needs to recruit, train and retain new volunteer First Responders. With almost 70% of our calls being medical assist calls, there is a critical need for volunteers willing to commit to training and responding to these types of calls, as well as fires and other emergencies.

### Training

You can never have enough training for this type of job and getting volunteers properly trained is a challenge. In 2019 our department will focus on firefighting drills and practical medical skills during our training nights. New volunteers will receive in person and online/video training coordinated by the Training Officer. Volunteers seeking certifications will be sent to classes



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taught by accredited organizations. The department funds travel and class costs for approved trainings with some funding coming from the Texas Forest Service.

## **Purchase Five SCBAs**

The department purchased 5 new SCBAs in 2018 with the help of a grant from LCRA. We still have 4 very old SCBAs on Engine 501 in Selkirk that need to be replaced. The department expects to receive a Texas Forest Service grant in 2019 to help purchase new SCBAs for Engine 501 and the new grass truck we intend to purchase. This will cost approximately \$25k with \$15k coming from the grant.

## **Replace Jaws of Life**

The department currently has an old (maybe 15 years) set of spreaders and cutters. This older system is not capable of cutting new vehicles with ultra high strength steel. We need to purchase a new spreader, cutter, ram and hydraulic power unit in order to provide expedient vehicle rescue. This will cost approximately, \$26K.

## **Fire Prevention**

Most good fire departments have some sort of fire prevention program. In 2019, Matagorda Volunteer Fire Department will focus on preparing residents for a fire. The best time to fight a fire is in the incipient stage before the fire starts to grow. Fire extinguishers are extremely effective and easy to use. In rural areas, all residents should be armed with at least one fire extinguisher in the home.

The department will encourage all residents to have working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. If funding is available, we will offer live fire training with fire extinguishers to our community.

## **Hurricane Preparedness**

During hurricane Harvey, emergency services were significantly disrupted in our area and throughout the county. While we were lucky, our county is still not prepared for a major natural disaster. The Matagorda Volunteer Fire Department will develop a plan prior to the 2019 hurricane season to ensure that emergency services remain available in our area at all times when possible.