



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE to:

Upper Brazos Property Owners' Association

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## **Brazos Canyon Volunteer Fire Department**

### *District Information*

TIERRA AMARILLA, NM, July 14, 2022 — Brazos Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (BCVFD) was organized in 1998 and sanctioned by the State of New Mexico in 1999. The current fire station, *Michael J. Hays Station*, was completed in the summer of 2008.

### **The department's fleet includes:**

- Engine 1: pumper, holds 1,026 gallons, and has foam capability.
- Engine 2: pumper, holds 1,000 gallons, and carries extrication equipment.
- Tender: water tanker, holds 1,024 gallons. This type truck is useful in areas where little or no water is available within close proximity of a fire. **This apparatus is going to be replaced with a tender that holds 3,000 gallons. The tender will be delivered late 2022 or early 2023.**
- Brush Truck 1: Fast attack brush truck, holds about 450 gallons, four-wheel drive.
- Brush Truck 2: Fast attack brush truck, holds 509 gallons, four-wheel drive
- Mini Pumper: holds 250 gallons, four-wheel drive.
- Two 6-wheel drive Polaris UTVs with firefighting (95 gallons/5 gallons foam) and rescue capability (litter).
- Command Vehicle: 2002 Ford Excursion, four-wheel drive.

### **The department's water resources include:**

- Pond water
- Green tank: 56,000 gallons
- Gallery tank: 36,000 gallons
- Tank near pump house: 14,000 gallons
- Underground storage tanks along 512: 24,000 gallons
- Stored tanks in the Ponderosa: 39,000 gallons
- Another set of Ponderosa tanks once filled will hold 10,000 gallons. At this time these tanks are not complete and do not contain water.

Brazos Canyon Volunteer Fire Department consists of approximately twenty-three active firefighters, all of which are volunteer unpaid positions in Rio Arriba County (RAC). The acting chief of the department is Michael R. Valdez, MD, MPH&™ and the acting assistant chief is Jeff Taylor.

Most active firefighters put in approximately fifty-five to over one-hundred hours each year. The Chief of the department follows a set of RAC Bylaws for governance of the minimum participation allowed by the state in order to be in good standing.

The BCVFD Fire District is approximately 38 to 40 square miles in size with much of it very rugged forested mountainous and remote terrain. The District is bordered on the south by eight (8) miles of the Brazos River, on the west by 5.5 miles of United States Highway 84 (U.S. 84), on the north by Cañones Road County Road 342 (C.R. 342) (actually the fence bordering the Jicarilla reservation property), and on the east by the foothills of the San Juan Mountain Range. The District can be divided into three areas: the Brazos area with numerous subdivisions along State Road 512 (S.R. 512), including the UBPOA area; the Ponderosa area accessible via County Road 341 (C.R. 341); and the Cañones Creek area accessible via C.R. 342. BCVFD is responsible to respond to fire and other emergency calls anywhere within the District, and if requested, to assist other neighboring fire departments with various emergencies.

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating for the department is 6/6X. This rating is granted after a thorough inspection by the State Fire Marshal and is determined by the department's firefighting capabilities (active members, apparatuses, equipment, water sources and availability, training, etc.). The BCVFD has two designated main stations: one located in the Brazos Canyon, and the other in the Ponderosa area. The primary funding for the department comes from the State Fire Marshal's Office and is based on the number of main stations and the overall equipment in the stations.

### *FireWise USA® and Fire Mitigation*

BCVFD is active in community involvement in educating the District's landowners on mitigation—defensible space strategies. The department was a recipient of two large grants for wildfire risk mitigation. The first was a Wildland Urban Interface grant with the New Mexico State Forestry Department (NMSFD). The NMSFD identified Brazos Canyon as one of the top communities in the state most at risk from catastrophic wildfire. The second grant comes from meeting all of the requirements of developing a FireWise community or program. This FireWise USA® program is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters.

Becoming a FireWise USA® community is not an easy feat without the determination and many hours from volunteers. Captain Stan Tarasek has headed up the department's FireWise USA® program and the requirements have not been easy. Residents probably have seen activity of tree removal up until 2021 when the grant money was depleted.

Thank you to all of the residents who partook in filing the application. Unfortunately not all applications were fulfilled for different reasons, one being financial. The department is looking at more of these grants for the future but the requirements are stiff.

For a FireWise USA® community to be successful in receiving grant monies, it is required that BCVFD invest annually the equivalent of one volunteer hour valued at \$24.14 per dwelling unit in wildfire risk reduction actions. Qualifying expenditures could include contractor costs, rental equipment, volunteer activities, other grants, etc., that may be used in the risk reduction part of the program requirements.

The department has been contracting a chipper as part of fire risk management.

As part of the FireWise USA® program, it is important to get the word out to the land and homeowners within the BCVFD District to mitigate to reduce fire risk.

Please contact Captain Stan Tarasek for more information regarding FireWise USA® and mitigation. If you are doing any type of wildfire risk management or mitigation on your property, please contact Stan regarding ways that you can help BCVFD meet the required investment amount. That number is 575-588-0014 or email

[BCVFD512@gmail.com](mailto:BCVFD512@gmail.com).

If you are interested in serving as a FireWise USA® volunteer, please contact Captain Tarasek.

### *Becoming a Member of BCVFD*

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Brazos Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, you are encouraged to contact Chief Valdez, Assistant Chief Taylor, or Public Affairs Officer, Lt. Sanchez-Praiswater at 575-588-0014 or email [BCVFD512@gmail.com](mailto:BCVFD512@gmail.com) . They will discuss the requirements and bylaws with you prior to joining. If you would like to volunteer in the department but you do not want to be a firefighter then think about joining as an auxiliary member. The auxiliary members are community landowners who make delicious foods and desserts and assist with the department's fundraisers and social events. Please call or email Lt. Sanchez-Praiswater for more information on the BCVFD's Auxiliary.

The department wishes to thank all of you who have donated time and money in wildfire risk mitigation around your home and within the BCVFD's District.

Safe journeys!