



WESTLAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Travis County Emergency Service District #9
1301 S. Capital of Texas Hwy, Suite B-123
Austin, TX 78746
www.westlakefd.org
Headquarters 512-539-3400

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
P O Box 162170
Austin, TX 78716-2170
email: pio@WestlakeFD.org
On Duty PIO 512-539-3444

Travis County ESD No. 9 Honors Firefighters

January 21, 2017 – Travis County ESD No. 9, also known as the Westlake Fire Department honored firefighters and EMTs at the Hotel Granduca Saturday evening, January 21st for their work during 2016. Fire Chief Mike Elliott presented awards to honor those members of the Department who serve and exceed the expectations of the community.

Emergency Services District No. 9 Board of Commissioners, Bob Moore from Travis County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty's Office, and Jasper Brown from Austin EMS were also in attendance to thank firefighters for protecting the community and their service to the public.

Sixteen Phoenix Awards were given to firefighters who performed CPR and saved a life. Over the last 12 years the Department has given 76 Phoenix Awards to firefighters who saved lives.

Exemplary Service Awards were presented to District Chief Walter Groman and LT. Heath Nobles for their work to make improvements to one of the fire stations.

Firefighters Ben Williams, Seth Bonnacarrere, Trent McClain and Engineer Mitch Thomas were all awarded Fire Achievement Awards given for outstanding achievement during 2016.

Engineer Mitch Thomas was awarded the Firefighter of the Year award given to those who have demonstrated outstanding achievement, conducted themselves in a professional manner and have provided the Department and the community with public service that is above and beyond the missions and goals of the Department.

LT. Justin Poag was awarded the Mike Elliott Leadership Award, created in 2014. "LT. Poag is a prime example of the leadership the Department should recognize annually. He demonstrates honesty, loyalty, honor, decision making and toughness which are all part of the criteria that defines this award" Chief Elliott said.

Chief Elliott commented "Our best and most important asset is our personnel. Without the excellent professional staff and firefighters we have we could not continue to provide the exceptional service our community expects and deserves".



Engineer Mitch Thomas receives the Firefighter of the Year Award from Fire Chief Mike Elliott.



LT. Justin Poag receives the Mike Elliott Leadership Award from Chief Elliott



Ten members of the Westlake Fire Dept. received 16 Phoenix Awards from Chief Elliott for saving lives in 2016.

(L-R) top row: Micah Fain, Scott Elkins, Josh O'Quin, Mitch Thomas, Chief Elliott, Rusty DeFoy, David Wilson, Justin Poag.

Bottom Row: Seth Bonnacarrere, Chris Gill and Ken Campbell

History of the Westlake Fire Department

About 9 a.m. on Friday, April 14, 1961, a motorist traveling along St. Stephen's School Road on the western boundary of the Roy Ranch carelessly tossed a lighted cigarette out the window and ignited a grass fire. A strong wind out of the west quickly spread the flames east across the Roy Ranch and onto Davenport Ranch, where the owner had large piles of brush from clearing land for cattle. There the fire leaped from one old brush pile to another and fed on dried vegetation in canyons and ravines leading southward. More than two hundred students from The University of Texas and St. Edward's University volunteered to fight the fire. An intensive two-day community effort stopped the fire short of Bee Creek.

After that fire, residents who fought the fire (Col. EV Robnett, Emmett Shelton Jr, Charlie Schlemmer, Joe Basher and Matt Van Winkle) started looking for a way to form a Rural Fire District. Travis County Rural Fire District No. 1 was the second fire district in the state to form under a new law. They collected money from residents, bought a new International Fire Truck and kept it at what is now known as St. 901.

In 1995, the District asked the residents to vote on forming an Emergency Services District. The vote passed and that was the beginning of Travis County ESD No. 9.

In 2016, WFD is now a professional organization with two fire stations and over 30 highly trained firefighters. We are proud to uphold our continuing mission to preserve life and property.

The Westlake Fire Department protects a community of approximately 15,000 citizens and covers a district of approximately 17 square miles and serves the areas of Rollingwood, West Lake Hills, Rolling Hills West, Westwood, Camelot, Rob Roy, St. Stephens, Rivercrest and Riverhills.

For more information, please contact the on-duty PIO via pager at 935-7979 or check our website at westlakefd.org.