

New volunteer fire department in the works for Bell County

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A new volunteer fire department is forming in Bell County and is expected to be operational by Oct. 1, Fire Chief David Kirk said.

Sparta Volunteer Fire Department is his passion, said Kirk, who's been a firefighter for about 10 years.

Kirk said members of the community wanted a local fire department, and having one should help lower insurance rates.

"It's exciting to know that Sparta VFD will soon be here

to help take care of the members of the community," he said.

He said he was given the assumed name of Sparta VFD on March 19 and had the employer identification number and certificate of formation before the end of the month.

The department will cover a part of the Sparta Road area outside of Belton city limits that is not covered by Central Bell Fire and Rescue.

Lott Volunteer Fire Department gave Sparta VFD a bright green fire engine, and it will

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have another engine in about 10 days donated by the Texas Forest Service, which has already given them a brush truck. Departments in the Big Bend area have donated masks, bunker gear and hoses. An Austin area department is donating hoses, nozzles, more bunker gear and boots — whatever they can spare, Kirk said.

The Marathon Volunteer Fire Department in Alpine donated sets of self-contained breathing apparatus, a cascade system for refilling the apparatus and a Jaws of Life to the department.

So far, the department has 12 firefighters — seven or eight who are experienced and the remainder who are training now.

The firefighters trained with Belton Fire Department on Tuesday.

Some items still on their "wish list" include ventilation fans, nozzles, radios, gloves, helmets and smaller size boots.

"Right now we have enough hose we could fight a structure fire," Kirk said.

Kirk also is excited about providing EMS care to the community. Capt. Kenneth Drake is working on getting their EMS licensed through the state.

He said anyone interested in volunteering with Sparta VFD can email contact information to svvfd09@yahoo.com or come by the department at 7041 Sparta Road.

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