



September 2, 2009

All in Due Time!

This year's logo for our annual picnic and parade was "Here 4 You". That logo is very appropriate given all the issues surrounding fire and rescue services in our community and it is very true. We will be here for you regardless of the politics and people who may tend to discourage our volunteers. The Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department has operated for 39 years and we'll operate for 39 more fulfilling the current mission of our department, "We Serve Because We Care". This is a mission handed down from those who recognized the need in our community and founded this fine fire department.

Chief T.R. Drake, Mr. Dick Jackson, Mr. Pete Barnes, Mr. Lauren Hunt, Mr. Bob Justice, Mr. Hilliard Heathman, Mr. Harry Murphy, Mr. Don Nicholson, Mr. Perry Neville, and Mr. Larry Lee founded this fire department to serve the community and that is what we will continue to do. The sacrifices these fine gentlemen made to organize our fire department also continue today and will continue tomorrow. This is because of the servant hearts of the members who make up the Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department. We will also continue to serve because of the generous contributions made to our department by those 30% of citizens who also care about the fire department and the community in which they live.

Much coverage has been given in recent weeks to funding for fire & emergency services. Why the fire tax? Our department has been well managed over the last 39 years and has been dependent on donations and caring volunteers. Time has changed our community and the lives of those who volunteer. As a result, it is time for an alternative means of funding that is fair to all citizens. This means of funding has not been driven by the Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department, it has been driven by others who have demanded the county live within the means of the law and fund fire protection through taxation. Kingston Springs started the fire tax funding by realizing that in order for city residents to not fund fire protection in their county area, the county and its residents had to fund their own service. Now Ashland City has said enough is enough. Those of us on the North end of the county have avoided the issue of our residents paying a fire tax for seven years now, and this has saved our residents over \$3.7 million.

Not only have we avoided a fire tax for the past seven years, we have continued to donate over \$1.8 million dollars per year in personnel to providing fire and

rescue services. The one direct savings our citizens have benefited from is their insurance premiums. Our residents save at least \$1.3 million annually in insurance premiums because of our ISO rating. These benefits totaled result in an average of \$402 per household saved annually as a direct result of the fire department. The average house in our area would pay \$71 in fire taxes, based upon a 19 cent fire tax rate.

Why would we seek the fire tax now? We aren't, others are. However, why should the men and women of our department continue to give of their time and money when the elected officials are making decisions that provide funding to other departments in the county because they demand it? In order to maintain our service levels and improve the service, we need the funding as well. Also, why wouldn't we work to create a system where everyone at least pays their fair share of a baseline service? We have tried to do this at a minimal cost, however, some of our elected officials have refused to settle on a plan that is beneficial to the entire county, which makes the system cheaper, and demanded that each area support their own operations. As a result, we are forced to ensure our fire department is compensated from the county at a rate comparable to the other departments. The Board of Directors of the Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department stands ready to see this issue through to the end, and believes that the time has come for Cheatham County to pay for the services it receives.

Regardless of what the outcome of this issue is, we will continue to serve the residents of our fire district. We are going to hold the county responsible for funding their portion of services so that the cities and our donation efforts don't continue to fund what the county fails to fund. Cheatham County has received millions of dollars worth of fire protection coverage at an inequitable rate and the time has come for them to provide for all if they choose to provide for one.

Please support the Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department and let your county elected officials know that you don't expect your fire and rescue services to be provided completely by good, hard working citizens who give freely of their time. Let's all be thankful for what we have enjoyed for years and continue that for years to come. Our system will continue to depend on volunteers for many years to come, however, let's show them the support and at least reimburse them for their expenses and provide them with the facilities and equipment they need to provide us with quality service.

Shane Ray, Fire Chief
Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department
P.O. Box 336
Pleasant View, Tennessee 37146