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Volunteer Firefighters Need Your Help Too

Since January, wildfires have burned more than 3.5 million acres in Texas and destroyed over 2,400 structures, that's according to The State Fire Marshal's Association of Texas.

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Since January, wildfires have burned more than 3.5 million acres in Texas and destroyed over 2,400 structures, that's according to The State Fire Marshal's Association of Texas.

Most of those on the front lines of these wildfires are volunteers and their resources are running thin.

Wildfires are burning across the state.

More than 77% of the fire departments battling those fires are made up of volunteers.

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"You can imagine if that went away, where would that leave the state and this community?"

Joe Ondrasek has been volunteering in Brazos County for 29 years. He and the others don't get paid, but he says they do it to fill the need.

Chief Ondrasek said, "There's not enough money available to support a full time, career-type of fire department to serve all the areas that the rural volunteer fire departments serve."

They sacrifice their day jobs, personal lives and all too often their own health and safety.

Ondrasek said, "Our department has suffered one line of duty death...Also, in that year, we had several firefighters get burned on an incident...and I was one of those."

Earlier this week, in Leon County, seven firefighters suffered burns and smoke inhalation.

The Texas Wildfire Relief Fund is a state-wide non-profit where you can donate funds to help first responders.

If money isn't something you can offer, another area where they're lacking, is manpower.

"By far, our biggest need in resources is people," Ondrasek said.

In the meantime, these volunteers who are our friends and neighbors, will keep fighting to extinguish the worst wildfires in state history.

When you donate money to volunteer fire departments, the money can be used for everything from supplies like chainsaws and bunker gear, to insurance that pays benefits for missed day's wages for firefighters.

The Eagle, KBTX Media and WTAW/Candy 95 are collecting funds for volunteer firefighters working wildfires in the Brazos Valley.

A fund has been set up at The Bank and Trust and donations can be made at any of their locations: 2900 S. Texas Ave., 3400 Texas 21, 1920 W. Villa Maria Road, Suite 202, all in Bryan, or the College Station location, 2305 Texas Ave., S.

Please make the check out to BV Media Giving Back, and note in the "memo" line that it's for volunteer firefighters. The drive ends Oct. 15.

Find this article at:

http://www.kbtx.com/news/headlines/Volunteer_Firefighters_Need_Your_Help_Too_129558388.html

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