



Office of Ellis County Judge Todd Little
For Immediate Release

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“First Board Members Sworn in for Two New Emergency Services Districts”

Ellis County, TX – On February 6th and 10th, the first-ever board members for Ellis County Emergency Services Districts #11 (Alma) and #10 (Bardwell), respectively, took their oaths of office. These two emergency services districts (ESD’s) were approved by local voters in the November 5th, 2024 General Election and will provide fire & rescue services to area residents.

“Our volunteer firefighters are behind this effort,” explained County Judge Todd Little, who administered the oaths of office for ESD #10. “We’ve all seen the recent fires out in California and how quickly the danger can spread to devastate entire neighborhoods. Organizing into ESD’s will allow our first responders to more effectively procure the equipment they need to keep our citizens safe, and as official government entities, both the ESD’s and the county will benefit from enhanced communications integration.”

Unlike volunteer fire departments, ESD’s levy a local property tax to cover the costs of procuring and maintaining equipment, as well as many administrative needs. Additionally, ESD’s are authorized to connect to official public safety communications infrastructure, thus contributing significantly to a well-coordinated incident response alongside other emergency services.

“When I was Mayor of Red Oak, I remember the first time we bought a ladder truck for our fire department,” said Little. “All of a sudden, you saw developers looking into multi-story buildings where they hadn’t been able to build them before. Fire-fighting capabilities absolutely shape the way that an area can develop, and as the ‘boots on the ground’ in Alma and Bardwell, our local first responders are laying the necessary foundation to prepare for future growth.”

Leading the effort to organize the new ESD’s were Alma VFD Chief Brian Mundie and Bardwell VFD Treasurer/EMS Captain Robert Gillentine. In the City of Milford, VFD Captain Jaylon Davis circulated the legally-required petition to create an ESD there as well, which the Ellis County Commissioners’ Court accepted in January in order to call a special election on May 3rd for local voters to decide on creating the district.

“This all started about five years ago,” said Gillentine. “[We were] figuring out whether we were going to file bankruptcy, or we were going to dissolve the department... We spent a lot of time with the guys over in Avalon, especially in ESD #6... Those guys have been very beneficial and helped us grow until we got started.”

“The Alma VFD has been proudly serving since the 1970’s,” said Mundie, “but with the growth we’re seeing, it’s certainly not getting any less expensive for us to have the tools we need. This is really going to help us serve the community better.”

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