Travis County Emergency Services District 3 Coordinates Deployment of Fire Resources in Response to Hurricane Harvey

Travis County, Texas – Through the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS), Travis County Emergency Services District (ESD) 3, Oak Hill Fire Department, is coordinating fire service-based resources being deployed to Houston and the Texas coastal area in response to Hurricane Harvey.

Travis County is part of the 24-county Central Branch of TIFMAS, which is a program designed for the Texas Fire Service to, in part, help mobilize systems to make statewide use of local resources. The Central Branch has deployed 39 units, to include fire engines, brush trucks, water tenders and boats, as well as 125 personnel from 26 different departments to the coast. These personnel have made hundreds of rescues and continue to work on restoring local fire departments to a functional state.

“To date, approximately 550 responders have been deployed to Houston and to counties along the Texas coast,” said JJ Wittig, Oak Hill Fire Department Chief and TIFMAS Central Branch Resource Coordinator. “In addition to equipment, this has been a massive undertaking for TIFMAS and by far the largest.”

TIFMAS is a mutual aid program in which resources are requested through the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Once orders are received by TIFMAS, work ensues to locate and deploy mutual aid assets from across the state to meet the needs as requested by the impacted jurisdiction. Responders are tracked and integrated into the local incident management system for the safety of all responders involved. Reimbursement for these resources can only be made after being officially requested through the State.

Chief’s Wittig’s primary focus has largely been the coordination of resources to send to the coastal areas. As one of the Branch Resource Coordinators for TIFMAS, a program of the Texas A&M Forest Service, Wittig has been locating and obtaining approvals to send resources from the 24-county Central Branch to multiple coastal areas.

It is anticipated that there may be more requests either to supplement those already deployed or to replace these units with fresh personnel. It is unknown at this time how long the deployment will last.

###