

Texas Fire Chiefs Association



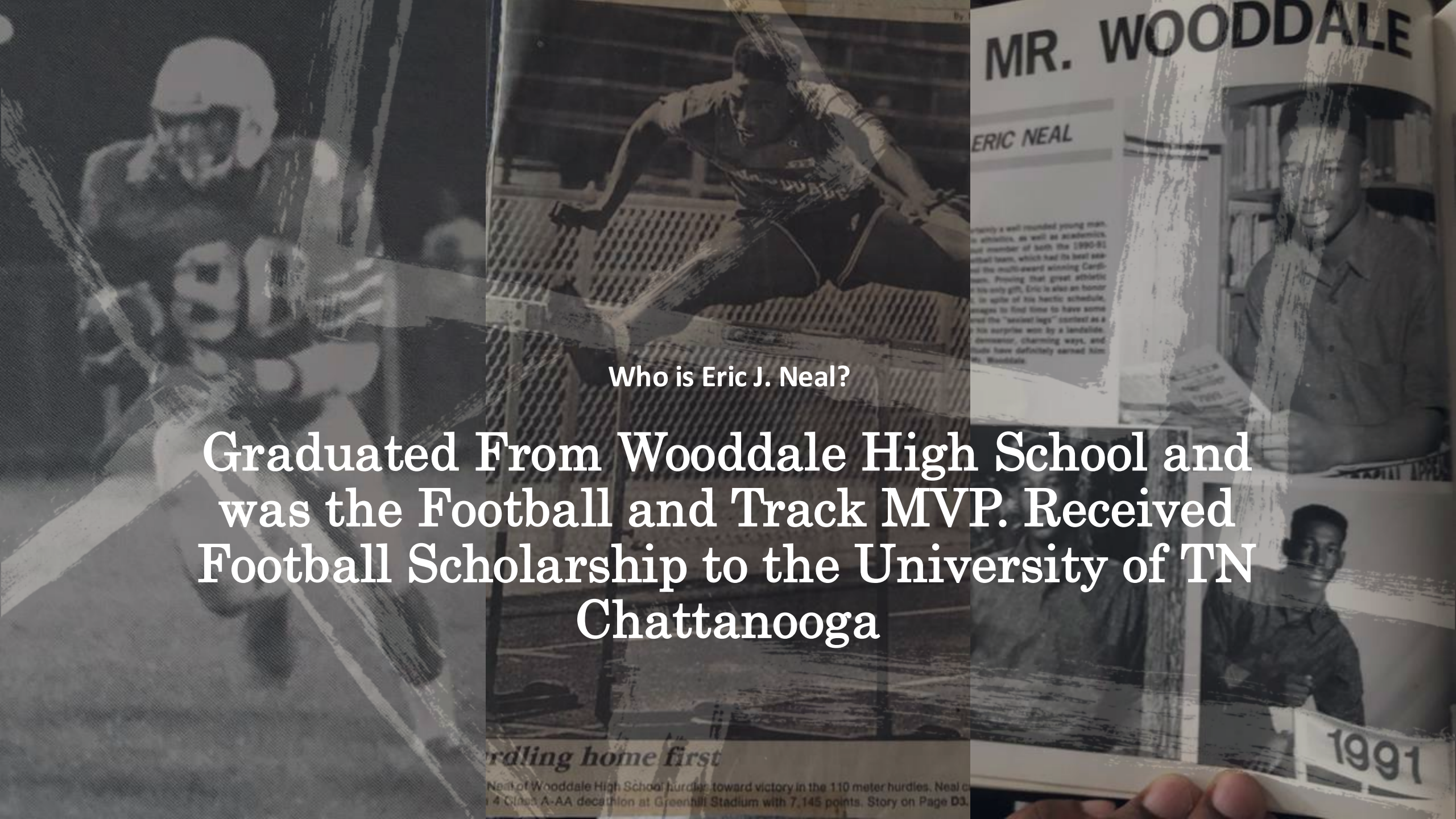
WELCOME!





Who is Eric J. Neal?

Born and raised in Memphis TN



Graduated From Wooddale High School and
was the Football and Track MVP. Received
Football Scholarship to the University of TN
Chattanooga

Who is Eric J. Neal?

Leading home first

Neal of Wooddale High School hurdles toward victory in the 110 meter hurdles. Neal placed 4th in the 4 Class A-AA decathlon at Greenhill Stadium with 7,145 points. Story on Page D3.





Offered a Job to Join the Shelby County Fire Dept in 1997.

Who is Eric J. Neal?



18 years with Shelby County Fire Department.
Firefighter, Lieutenant, Battalion Chief

Member of TNTF1 from 2000 - 2013

SWAT Medic with Sheriff Dept 2005 - 2010

Who is Eric J. Neal?



Left Memphis for a better
life. Moved Family to
Arlington in 2013!

Who is Eric J. Neal?



Who is Eric J. Neal?

Continued career with Arlington Fire in 2014



Who is Eric J. Neal?

Hired as Balch Springs Fire Chief June 2021

Challenges of a First Year Fire Chief

August 2021 – August 2022

Challenges of a First Year Fire Chief

August 2021 – August 2022

Disclaimer: This is not a class on how to be a Fire Chief. These are my experiences to help those aspiring Fire Chiefs prepare for all possibilities!



Swearing In

August 2, 2021



What Kind of Leader are You?





100 Day Plan

August 3, 2021 – November 10, 2021

TIME TO LEARN AND OBSERVE

- Identify and align political, administrative and operational expectations.
- Make sure my first impression is a foundational building block for the future.
- Lay the groundwork for a sustainable and enhanced vision for the organization.
- Understand the acceleration of change and ensure things can be absorbed.
- Deal with cultural challenges within the organization.



100 Day Plan

August 3, 2021 – November 10, 2021

TIME TO LEARN AND OBSERVE

- Interim Police Chief
- Interim Human Resource Director
- Civil Service Director (Voluntold)
- Finalized Budget for New Fiscal Year
- Assistant City Manager Resigned

Budget Prep

October 1, 2021, Fiscal Year Begins



PRE-BUDGET CONSIDERATION

Knowing your organization's priorities, objectives and goals helps as you begin to prepare your budget. As you begin, ask yourself the following questions:



Budget Prep

October 1, 2021, Fiscal Year Begins

PRE-BUDGET CONSIDERATION

- What is the time period with which you are working?
- What does your department most want to accomplish?
- How will you accomplish this?
- How much will it cost?
- Where is the money coming from?

Prioritizing Objectives

After 100 Day Planning, what actions should take place?



LIST OF OBJECTIVES AND HOW TO ACCOMPLISH .

- New Apparatuses
- Positions within the rank structure and additional personnel.
- Station Build
- Ambulance Service

Community Engagements

Back to School Drives
Grand Openings
Employee Appreciations
Ceremonies



Community Engagements

Outreach Programs

Recruitment Opportunities

Mentorships

Block Parties



Continued Education

Learning to Lead Effectively!

FO II, FO III, Master FF, ISO, HOD



Conferences & Classes

TFCA Conference

CFE Year One

Texas Municipal League

National CERT Conference

CFE Year Two

Reasons To Attend Professional Conferences

- Build Knowledge and Skills
- Keep Up With Emerging Industry Trends
- Network and Meet Potential Customers
- Connect With Like-Minded Businesses

Cultural Changes

The Only Constant is Change



WALK A FINE LINE TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

- An Outside Fire Chief
- The only African American on the Department
- No Head of Department Experience
- Ideas based on past departments worked
- Political Pressures for Immediate Change

Partnering Agencies



BUILDING AGREEMENTS TO SUCCESS

Relationships with surrounding Departments

- Third Party Contracts
- Mutual Aid Agreements
- City Support Services
- County Support Agreements
- Interlocal Agreements
- MOU with Joint collaborative partners.

Partnering Agencies

Relationships with surrounding Schools and Businesses, like Home Depot and Walmart.



Vangaurd High School Fire Academy

- Mentorship of young people
- Advocates for Fire Departments
- Life Lessons to encourage positivity
- Career goals through the program
- Building relationships through community involvement

Community Risk Reduction

A Stronger Community Starts with the Community



COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

- Give the citizens a reason to become involved.
- Connection through meetings and training sessions.
- Additional assistance with disasters and recovery.

Community Risk Reduction

A Stronger Community Starts with the Community



COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

- Attended National CERT Association Conference
- Requested Mayor Gordon and Emergency Mgr. Harris to attend and take Program Manager Class.

Handling Emergencies

Ordinary Emergencies to Extraordinary
Emergencies.



PREPARING FOR THE WORST POSSIBLE SITUATIONS

- Personal Preparation
- Crew Preparation
- Response Preparation
- Scene Preparation

Handling Emergencies

Balch Springs Fires And Floods



YOUR LEADERSHIP WILL BE CHALLENGED

- Citizens well being is why we do what we do.
- City Officials want Satisfaction.
- Peer Pressures.
- Self Evaluation is an ongoing process.



Handling Emergencies

Balch Springs Fires

Balch Springs Fire Marshal Sean Davis, right, listens to a question from a reporter alongside Balch Springs Fire Chief Eric Neal during a news conference at Balch Springs City Hall in Balch Springs, Texas Tuesday, July 26, 2022. A grass fire apparently sparked by a mower swept about 300 yards across a tinder-dry open field to a suburban Dallas subdivision Monday, burning through wooden fences and torching as many as 20 homes, officials said.

Historic Fires July 26, 2022

- Zero Notice
- Delayed Response
- Overgrown Brush
- Wind Gusts over 20 mph
- Limited water source
- Grass to Structure



Balch Springs Fire Marshal Sean Davis, right, listens to a question from a reporter alongside Balch Springs Fire Chief Eric Neal during a news conference at Balch Springs City Hall in Balch Springs, Texas Tuesday, July 26, 2022. A grass fire apparently sparked by a mower swept about 300 yards across a tinder-dry open field to a suburban Dallas subdivision Monday, burning through wooden fences and torching as many as 20 homes, officials said.

Elice Valverde II

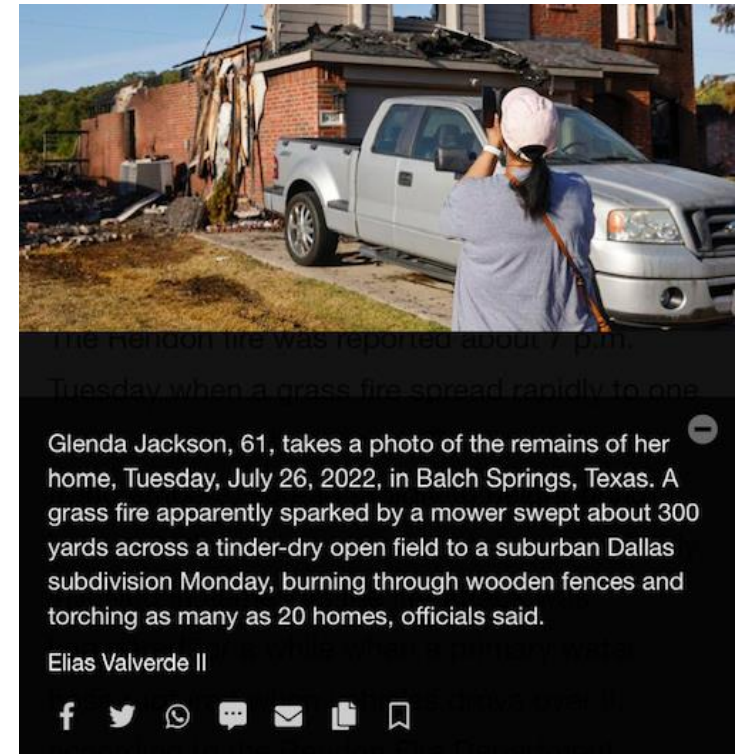
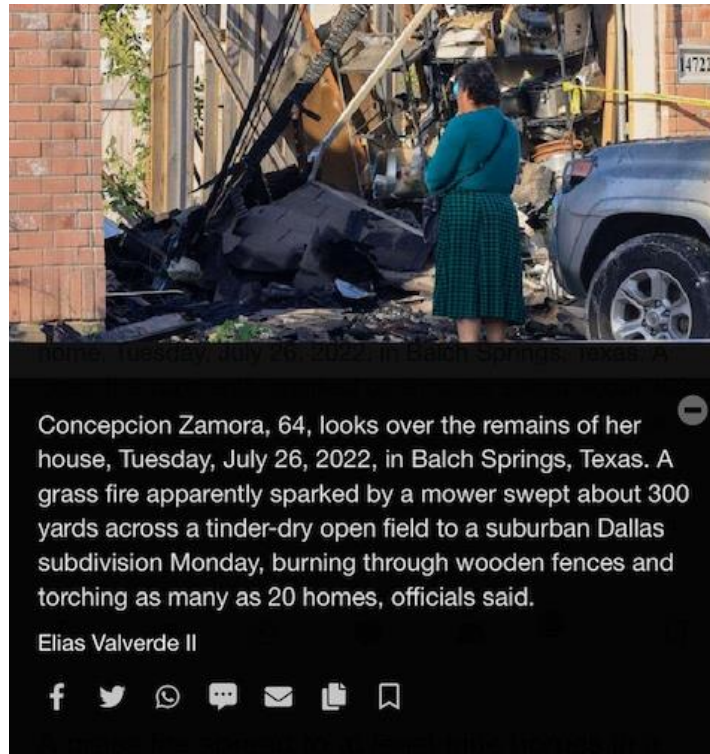


Affected Area



Affected Area

Mayor Gordon and I assessing the neighborhood the day after the fires!



Impact of Fires Balch Springs

- 33 Households affected; 124 residents displaced.
 - 11 Homes unoccupiable; required rebuild.
 - Support for uninsured renters and underinsured homeowners.
-
- Waste management and property clearance efforts.
 - Overwhelming amount of donations.
 - Typical mutual aid partners delayed. After contacting DCHSEM 14 mutual aid partners began arriving.

Responding Departments



Thank you for your assistance!



FILE - Members of the Balch Springs Fire Department bring a family of four by boat to higher ground after rescuing them from their home along Forest Glen Lane in Balch Springs, Texas, Aug. 22, 2022. This summer the weather has not only been extreme, but it has whiplashed from one extreme to another. Dallas, St. Louis, Kentucky, Yellowstone, Death Valley all lurched from drought to flood. (Elías Valverde II/The Dallas Morning News via AP, File)/The Dallas Morning News via AP)[ASSOCIATED PRESS/Elías Valverde II]

Handling Emergencies

Balch Springs Floods

Historic Floods

Aug. 22, 2022

- Weather Alert Notification
- Opened Shelters
- Blocked potential flood areas
- Urged low laying residents to evacuate.
- Water Rescues
- Recovery Process
- Dallas County Resources



FILE - Members of the Balch Springs Fire Department bring a family of four by boat to higher ground after rescuing them from their home along Forest Glen Lane in Batch Springs, Texas, Aug. 22, 2022. This summer the weather has not only been extreme, but it has whiplashed from one extreme to another. Dallas, St. Louis, Kentucky, Yellowstone, Death Valley all lurching from drought to flood. (Elías Valverde II/The Dallas Morning News via AP, File)/The Dallas Morning News via AP)[ASSOCIATED PRESS/Valverde II]

Historical Flooding in Balch Springs

Severity of flash flooding in Dallas area surprises residents as rescue crews respond to hundreds of calls for help!

Heavy rain and flash flooding brought record rainfall to the Dallas-Forth Worth area between Sunday and Monday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service Fort Worth. More than 9 inches fell at Dallas Fort Worth Airport over a 24-hour period that began Sunday, marking the highest rainfall over that length of time that the area has seen since 1932, the agency said.

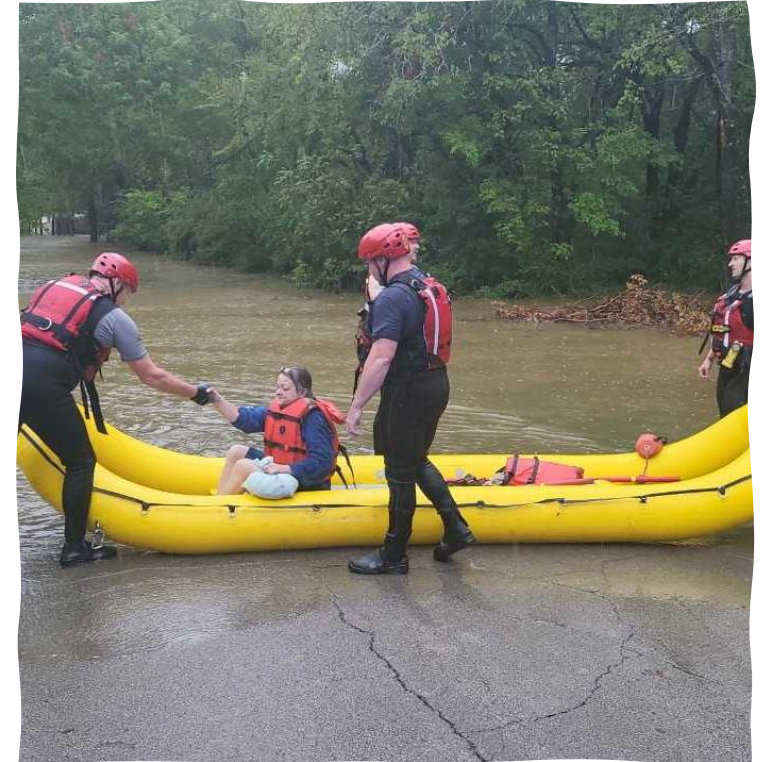


Historical Flooding in Balch Springs



Door to Door

Balch Springs Fire Rescue went Door to Door to assist residents out their flooded Homes.



Incident Priorities

- Life Safety
- Incident Stabilization
- Property Conservation

National Fire Academy Incident Priorities

PRIORITY

Life Safety

Incident Stabilization

Property Conservation

BENCHMARK

All Clear

Under Control

Loss Stopped

After Action

Learn From Your Mistakes

Own Your Failures

Be Prepared to make adjustments

Equip Accordingly

Train, Train, Train

Don't be afraid to
make · mistakes,
just · be · afraid
of · not · learning
from · · them.

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CERT in Action

- CERT dispatched to handle donations for both disasters.



Recovery Process

- Red Cross
- Sharing Life
- Neighborhood Services
- School District



Awards

- Visited Schools to give Citizen Awards to Students for their Heroism.



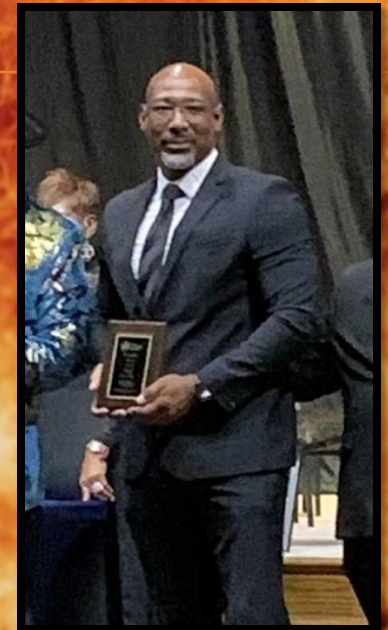
Awards

- Visited Schools to give Citizen Awards to Students for their Heroism.



Awards

- NAACP Hero Award
- Chaplain's Recognition Award
- Balch Springs Commendation



Who is the Hero?



Awards

- Firefighter of the Year Award goes to...
- The entire Balch Springs Fire Dept.
- Fires to Floods 2022



Awards

- Firefighter of the Year Award goes to...
- The entire Balch Springs Fire Dept.
- Fires to Floods 2022



Conclusion

The work never stops!



Conclusion

Prepare for the unexpected!



- ALL EYES ARE ON THE CHIEF
- PLAN FOR AN EXIT
- MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS
- BE YOUR OWN PERSON
- THE FIRST YEAR IS THE HARDEST
- FIREFIGHTERS COME FIRST



Thank You!

Fire Chief Eric J. Neal

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**Book Available Online
In Digital and Print Now!**