

Honoring First Responders on September 11

Many residents of Horseshoe Bay distinctly recall the events of September 11, 2001, when Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked two planes and flew them into both towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, while a third was flown into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. A fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was diverted by heroic passengers away from its presumed target, the White House.

After reports of the first plane hitting the North Tower, millions of Americans watched the second plane hit the South Tower on live television. The attacks in New York occurred in the country's busiest city on a busy workday. The staggered nature of the attacks meant that news footage captured many of these tragedies as they unfolded.

That day fundamentally changed our country; but the significant losses suffered on September 11, as profound as they were, did not break the spirit of our nation. Instead, it fortified Americans with pride and patriotism as we came together to demonstrate our strength, resilience, and esteem for one another.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, President George W. Bush proclaimed Friday, September 14, 2001, as a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks. A bill to make September 11 a national day of mourning was introduced in the U.S. House on October 25, 2001. The result was the resolution to proclaim September 11, 2002, as the first Patriot Day.

Patriot Day, now observed annually on September 11, is a day of remembrance in the United States to honor the victims, families, and first responders affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks. It's also a National Day of Service and Remembrance, encouraging acts of service and unity to commemorate the events of that day.

While not observed as a federal holiday, the City of Horseshoe Bay commemorates Patriot Day by flying flags at half-staff to honor the lives lost and the bravery of first responders who worked tirelessly to save as many people as possible.

As a National Day of Service and Remembrance, Patriot Day encourages Americans to engage in acts of service, reflecting the unity shown in the aftermath of the attacks. Other ways to honor the day include observing a moment of silence at 7:46 a.m. Central (8:46 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time), the time the first plane struck the World Trade Center, or attending memorial ceremonies.

Recognizing and appreciating the sacrifices of firefighters, police officers, and other first responders who bravely served on and after 9/11, and those who continue to serve us every day, is another way to observe Patriot Day.

First responders are the first line of defense, arriving at the scene of emergencies with the crucial skills and knowledge to save lives, restore order, and support recovery efforts, even when facing significant personal risk. They choose to serve because they are driven by a powerful desire to help others and make a positive difference in their communities.

The City of Horseshoe Bay is very fortunate to have a Fire Department staffed by 25 full-time firefighters and 1 part-time firefighter with a mission of protecting and serving our vibrant community with unwavering dedication and teamwork. The staff structure includes the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, 3 Shift Captains, 3 Lieutenants, 6 Engineers (Driver/Operators), and 10 Firefighters. Our Police Department employs 22 full-time police officers, 3 dispatchers, and 2 animal control officers who proudly serve the community with a full range of police-related services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

While Patriot Day is a wonderful time to stop by either Fire Station or the Police Station to express gratitude for their commitment and bravery, citizens are welcome to stop by any day to show their appreciation of our firefighters, police officers, and Marble Falls Area EMS personnel. Your kind words are very meaningful and greatly appreciated.

The City of Horseshoe Bay would also like to thank the Horseshoe Bay Ladies 9-Hole Golf Association and the Men's 9-Hole Golf Club for organizing a tournament today at Cap Rock to help raise funds for the Fire Department. These groups have garnered the support of numerous local businesses and individuals to donate funds for a fire rescue boat.

Members of the Fire Department and other City staff will be present to greet members of the community and say thank you.

We also thank the Hill Country 100 Club, which is hosting a golf tournament at Legends Golf Course in Kingsland today to raise funds to support over 67 first responder agencies in Blanco, Burnet, Lampasas and Llano Counties, including law enforcement, firefighters and EMS personnel.

Did You Know?

Have you ever noticed the phrase "Keep Back 343 Feet" on the back of a fire apparatus? The expression is a tribute to the 343 firefighters who died during on September 11, 2001. While other departments may use different distances (like 300 or 500 feet) to warn others about the heavy vehicle's stopping distance, the 343 feet serves as a symbolic act of honor and remembrance. By placing this specific number on their trucks, fire departments honor the courage of their fallen brothers and sisters and ensure their sacrifice is not forgotten.