

By: Swinford

H.B. No. 1915

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the creation of an online volunteer fire department
3 registry by the Texas Forest Service.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 614, Government Code, is amended by
6 adding Subchapter H to read as follows:

7 SUBCHAPTER H. ONLINE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT REGISTRY

8 Sec. 614.151. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

9 (1) "Part-paid fire department" means a fire
10 department operated by its members, some of whom are volunteers and
11 not more than 20 of whom are paid.

12 (2) "Service" means the Texas Forest Service of The
13 Texas A&M University System.

14 (3) "Volunteer fire department" means a fire
15 department operated by its members, including a part-paid fire
16 department, that is operated on a not-for-profit basis, including a
17 department that is exempt from federal income tax under Section
18 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by being listed as an exempt
19 organization in Section 501(c)(3) of that code.

20 Sec. 614.152. ADMINISTRATION OF ONLINE VOLUNTEER FIRE
21 DEPARTMENT REGISTRY. The service shall:

22 (1) establish and maintain an online registry of
23 volunteer fire departments located in this state that is accessible
24 to members of the public; and

1 (2) prescribe procedures necessary to implement this
2 subchapter.

3 Sec. 614.153. REGISTRATION REQUIRED. (a) Each volunteer
4 fire department in this state shall register with the service by
5 submitting to the service:

6 (1) an application for registration under Section
7 614.154; and

8 (2) the registration fee in the amount set by the
9 service.

10 (b) A volunteer fire department in this state may not engage
11 in firefighting activities involving a regional emergency incident
12 for which the service provides coordination unless the department
13 maintains a current registration with the service under this
14 subchapter.

15 Sec. 614.154. APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION. (a) An
16 application for registration must contain:

17 (1) the name of the volunteer fire department;

18 (2) the physical address of the volunteer fire
19 department;

20 (3) the mailing address of the volunteer fire
21 department;

22 (4) the number of volunteer firefighters and any other
23 personnel affiliated with the volunteer fire department;

24 (5) the name, address, and certification status under
25 Section 419.071 of each volunteer firefighter and any other
26 personnel affiliated with the volunteer fire department; and

27 (6) an itemized list of all firefighting equipment

1 used by the volunteer fire department for fire protection purposes.

2 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), a volunteer fire
3 department must submit an application online.

4 (c) A volunteer fire department may apply for a waiver of
5 the online registration requirement by submitting a written request
6 to the service for a written registration application.

7 Sec. 614.155. RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION. A volunteer fire
8 department shall renew the department's registration annually by
9 filing a renewal application for registration and paying the
10 registration renewal fee in a manner prescribed by the service.

11 Sec. 614.156. REGISTRATION AND REGISTRATION RENEWAL
12 FEES. The service shall set a reasonable registration fee and
13 registration renewal fee in an amount designed to cover the costs of
14 administering this subchapter.

15 Sec. 614.157. PUBLIC INFORMATION. Information submitted
16 to the service in an application for registration or for renewal of
17 registration is public information.

18 SECTION 2. The Texas Forest Service of The Texas A&M
19 University System shall establish the online registry required by
20 Section 614.152, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later
21 than January 1, 2008.

22 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.