

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Chief Scott Peterson
Stone Bank Fire Department
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Stone Bank Fire Department to Cease Operations as of December 31, 2019

Local Department to End over 110 years of Dedicated Service to the Community

[OCONOMOWOC, WI. OCTOBER 17, 2019--] Stone Bank Fire Department has been notified by the Town of Oconomowoc and the Town of Merton that they intend not to renew their contracts for Fire and EMS services with the Stone Bank Fire Department for 2020. This means that as of midnight on December 31, 2019, Stone Bank Fire Department will cease all fire, rescue, and EMS operations, ending over 110 years of dedicated and loyal service to the citizens of the towns of Oconomowoc, Merton, and Ashippun in our coverage area.

Stone Bank Fire Department does not agree with the decision to use a different provider for these services, and had proposed a plan to merge with the Lake Country Fire Department that would have saved the towns over \$1 million over the next 5 years, while also preserving the jobs of the current, locally-based personnel and providing 24/7 fire and EMS staffing in the Stone Bank station with paramedic level services for Town residents.

For over 110 years, the Stone Bank Fire Department has served the local community. Through funding from taxpayers as well as generous donations, the SBFDF is debt-free, for both the firehouse on Stone Bank Road as well as all of trucks, ambulances, and related equipment. SBFDF has been a diligent steward of the monies received while providing the best service possible to our residents and neighbors.

SBFDF has full and part time staffing during business hours, Monday-Friday to respond promptly with Advanced EMT and fire protection services. We also have 24/7 scheduled coverage for EMS (in place for the past 5 years) to provide prompt response and an advanced level of care for our residents, provided by an active membership with over 300 years of fire and EMS experience.

SBFDF wishes to thank all the citizens of our communities for their support over the years. In addition, we also wish to thank the SBFDF Chiefs, Officers, Fire Fighters, EMTs, MPOs, Drivers and Associate Members, both past and present, who dedicated thousands of volunteer hours for training, calls, fire prevention programs, fund raising, community support events, and various committees and boards.

We also wish to thank all of the surrounding Mutual Aid and MABAS Division 106, 118, and 129 Departments who we worked with over the years. It has been our honor and privilege working with our fellow brothers and sisters.

Should you have questions regarding the future fire, rescue, and EMS coverage for your town, we encourage you to read the attached frequently asked questions and to speak with and voice your opinion to your local town representatives. The new provider scheduled to take over the SBFDF response area has yet to contact the SBFDF leadership or members to ensure that locally-based SBFDF members, both full-time, and paid on-call, remain in place to provide a prompt response for incidents.

Stone Bank Fire Department has provided fire, rescue, and EMS operations to the residents of the Towns of Oconomowoc, Merton, and Ashippun since 1907. Through full-time, part-time, and paid on call members, the department has staffing and 24/7 EMS coverage with state trained and experienced firefighters and EMTs responding from both the Stone Bank Fire Station and the local area.

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For further information about this release, please contact Stone Bank Fire Chief Scott Peterson at 262.966.2414 or media@stonebankfd.com.

**Stone Bank Fire Department
Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: I am a Town of Merton/Town of Oconomowoc resident currently served by Stone Bank FD. What does this mean?

A: As of January 1, 2020, your Town Board has made the decision to use a different provider for fire, rescue, and EMS services for your community. This new provider has not shared a public plan for operations, response plans, coverage, or staffing at this time.

Q: Is the Stone Bank Fire Department merging with another department?

A: The Stone Bank Fire Department is **not** merging with another department as has been incorrectly reported by the press and town officials. The Stone Bank Fire Department will cease all operations as of December 31, 2019 and the new provider will serve the area beginning January 1, 2020. The Stone Bank Fire Department name will be retired and removed from any equipment and signage as the area will be served by a new provider.

As noted in the press release, SBFD had proposed and is still in favor of merging with the Lake Country Fire Department. This would have kept the Stone Bank Fire Department name, locally-based personnel, and equipment, while also staffing the Stone Bank Fire Station on a 24/7 basis with a paramedic/firefighter and an EMT/firefighter. This would have increased the level of EMS to a paramedic level for the residents of the community while also having staffed 24/7 firefighter coverage. This merger was estimated to save Town residents over \$1 million over 5 years.

Q: What happens to the locally-based personnel of SBFD?

A: As of October 17, 2019, none of the full-time, part-time, or paid on call membership of SBFD have been contacted by the new provider and offered positions. Therefore, current personnel would not be responding to any calls in the local area as of January 1, 2020.

Q: What does this mean for level of service, response times, skills sets, staffing, and the ISO ratings for my area?

A: No public information has been made available regarding any of these items by the Towns or the new provider.

Q: Where can I get more information or voice my opinion regarding this change?

A: We would encourage you to contact your local Town officials who made this decision with any questions and to voice your opinion about this change.

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