Meeting Notes – Sep. 5, 2023

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on Tuesday, June 5. Rotary president Steve Wheeler introduced our guests, Robert Griffith, John Ames, and Gene Quick, all representing the Oak Bowery Volunteer Fire and Rescue (OBVFR) and their program Neighbors Serving Neighbors. Robert Griffith referenced the April 27, 2011, tornadoes in Beauregard and the lessons learned from that tragedy. He stressed the importance of individuals getting training through their local fire department in order to respond appropriately to emergencies. Often, there is a several minute delay before the "official" first responders arrive on the scene. As neighbors, we can arrive much sooner and with the proper training can provide much-needed assistance. The goal of OBVFR Neighbors Serving Neighbors program is to be able to respond to any emergency that happens in the southern part of Chambers County. Disaster preparedness is another area of focus for OBVFR. In Chambers County, we have gas and electric lines, railroads, and the ever-present threat of tornados and fires. Disaster could occur involving any of those situations. Volunteers regularly participate in training exercises, such as search and rescue procedures.

The OBVFR recently secured a grant and other local donations to install a new 29,000-gallon emergency water supply tank at their station. A typical house or structure fire requires about 30,000 gallons of water to extinguish. The average fire truck holds only 4,000 gallons. This requires the truck to leave the scene of the fire, drive several miles to refill, then return to the fire. The addition of this new tank will provide much better fire protection for local homes and businesses. Dr. Griffith concluded by encouraging all of us to contact our local fire departments and seek training or volunteer our time in some capacity so we would be able to better respond in our own community.

Diane Sherriff