

## **MSA Safety, DuPont And NVFC Aid Highway K VFD And Valley View Volunteer Fire Department Avail Turnout Gear Via 2020 Gear Giveaway**

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MSA Safety, DuPont, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) are helping volunteer fire departments obtain much-needed gear through MSA's and DuPont's Globe Gear Giveaway. In 2020, 13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnout gear and four new helmets to help enhance the safety of their firefighters. The first 500 applicants also received a one-year NVFC membership, courtesy of MSA.

The latest recipients of MSA's and DuPont's Globe Gear Giveaway are the Highway K Volunteer Fire Department in Doniphan, MO, and the Valley View Volunteer Fire Department in Lawton, OK.

## **Highway K Volunteer Fire Department**

**Highway K Volunteer Fire Department (Highway K VFD) protects 95 square miles of rural southern Missouri**

Highway K Volunteer Fire Department (Highway K VFD) protects 95 square miles of rural southern Missouri, serving around 900 residents and responding to an average of 35 calls annually. Based out of Doniphan, Missouri, the department's 16 active volunteer firefighters share 12 sets of turnout gear, all of which were donated by other fire departments and are between 15 and 25 years old.

Without adequate protective gear, many of the normal duties required of firefighters become more difficult and dangerous. The department puts the health and safety of its members first, and due to the age and condition of their available gear, firefighters do not make interior entry during structural fires unless someone is trapped inside.

## **Rely on voluntary subscriptions and donations for funds**

Highway K VFD is not supported by any tax dollars and instead relies on voluntary

subscriptions, donations, and fundraisers. The department's firefighters and board of directors spend hundreds of hours each year to help with fundraising efforts, but community members have limited donations to give.

Rising operating costs and a small budget make purchasing multiple sets of turnout gear impossible. In addition to the safety implications, receiving the new gear from MSA Safety and DuPont will help the Highway K Volunteer Fire Department's efforts to recruit new firefighters.

*"Many [trained firefighters] do not want to volunteer for a department that cannot provide up-to-date gear,"* said Chief Greg Greenwood of the Highway K Volunteer Fire Department, adding *"I believe that having up-to-date gear that can be issued to the higher-trained volunteers will help with the recruitment and retention of volunteers."*

## **Valley View Volunteer Fire Department**

Valley View Volunteer Fire Department is a relatively new department serving a rural area of southern Oklahoma

Based out of Lawton, Oklahoma, the Valley View Volunteer Fire Department is a relatively new department serving a rural area of southern Oklahoma. In addition to protecting 15 square miles in the immediate vicinity of their station, the fire department is a state-certified emergency medical response agency and responds to other districts to provide fire safety and rescue services that they are lacking.

Founded in 2012, the Valley View Volunteer Fire Department's majority protective turnout gear was donated by other fire departments, but is now between 10 and 15 years old. Most of the fire department's budget has gone to build the fire station and equip their fire rescue trucks, leaving little left to purchase turnout gear.

*"The time it will take us to save up enough money [to purchase new gear] could be too late if something were to happen now with the old gear we have,"* said Chief Lin Newton of Valley View Volunteer Fire Department, adding *"The ability to receive new gear [through MSA's and DuPont's Globe Gear Giveaway] will allow us to meet the NFPA standards on gear and better protect our firefighters."*

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