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support from the public. Take Fire Rescue 3, for example, a 2013 Ford F-550 that was paid for completely by donations from county residents.

Stationed at Fire Station No. 3, Fire Rescue 3 is a medium duty rescue vehicle with far-reaching capabilities, and is utilized to respond to car wrecks and car fires, bicycle accidents, structure fires, wildland fires, as medical support, and even helps to establish air ambulance landing zones.

Rescue 3 can fight fire directly or act as a backup water supply for a fire engine, and it responds 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – no matter the emergency, Rescue 3 is at the ready.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to safety vehicles and equipment countywide that has been acquired through the generous support of communities surrounding each of the volunteer stations.

Station 3 is located near the Owltown community off

Gainesville Highway, and with its dedicated fire engine, tanker and other emergency vehicles, it acts as a first responder station to emergencies as far away as Vogel State Park and beyond.

On Saturday, June 17, Station 3 held its annual Open House, and though it's hard to say how many residents attended throughout the course of the day, there always seemed to be at least 100 people present at any given time after the first batch of burgers and hotdogs came off the grill.

Lt. Tim Schroeder in charge of Station No. 3 said that he and his fellow volunteer firefighters looked forward to the communal gathering each year.

"We like to meet the people, have the people meet us, see our station, see the equipment that we have here to help in their time of need," said Lt. Schroeder. "I want the community to know that we're volunteers, we're here to help."

"We volunteer to do this. We go through the training so that we can be as proficient as

possible to help support the community. We welcome people to come and help volunteer, we encourage that, but our main thing is to serve the community, to protect them in their greatest time of need."

Fire Station Nos. 2, 4, 5 and 10 have also gotten together with their communities recently, in exactly the same spirit as those who attended the Station 3 Open House on Saturday, and Union County Fire Chief and EMA Director David Dyer said that it's important for those relationships to continue.

"It's good for the fire department because they get to see the community, meet the people, let them voice any kind of ideas, views, how they feel about the fire department," said Dyer. "It's also good for the community because they can come see the equipment, see the firefighters, know who is going to respond to their emergencies so that they're familiar with them."

Station 3 honored two of its own on Saturday, recognizing them for their years



The family of Firefighter Dean Self, L-R: Heather Brown, Tony Brown and Faye Brown, with Station 3 2nd Lt. Bob Kirby and Station 3 1st Lt. Tim Schroeder. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

of dedicated service as volunteer firefighters who led the efforts of the station: County Fire Chaplain Lt. Joe Nickerson, and the late Dean Self, who passed away in April and was one of the first Battalion Chiefs in the county for Station 3.

The Georgia Forestry Commission and Fire Station No. 3 supplied plenty of free goodies for the kids in attendance, who in turn enjoyed meeting with Smokey the Bear and bouncing in the Fire Dog Bounce House.

Station 3 firefighters

put on a fire extinguishing demonstration for those gathered, and even had a little fire hose for the youngsters to safely practice their aim targeting painted flames.

The station collected donations in fire boots placed around the interior of the station, and held a raffle drawing for a variety of prizes.

Open House sponsors were Shawn's Home Furnishings, Meeks Park Pool, Bitternut Creek Golf Course, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Auto Zone, Brasstown Pharmacy, Monte

Alban, Mike's Seafood, Sicily's Pizza, Logan Turnpike Mill, Walmart, Save-A-Lot, Sears, Jim's Smokin' Que, Armadillo Grill and Foodland.

"I'm proud of our volunteer firemen at all the stations," said Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris. "They've got a huge crowd here, so we're thankful to the public for making the effort to come and show their appreciation, because these firefighters are available and ready day and night, 24 hours a day, to help the public."



Hundreds of residents attended the Station 3 Open House on Saturday, June 17. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



Hamburgers... Yum! With Mr. and Mrs. Fire Chief David and Kristy Dyer. Photo/Shawn Jarrard