

Building Bridges: Fostering Harmony and Collaboration Across Organizational Units

Creating harmony between ESD's, Command Staff and Firefighter Associations can be a significant challenge.

Developing a "one team" approach with diverse organizational units requires intentional leadership, clear open communication, transparency, shared sacrifice, and a strong focus on shared goals.



Building Bridges

Holly Gill, Comal County ESD#3

Bob Janusaitis, Comal County ESD#2

Chief Robbie Mikel, Canyon Lake Fire/EMS

Angela Hemphill, CFO Canyon Lake Fire/EMS

Charles Richard, Canyon Lake Professional Firefighters Association, #4713

Introduction

- Holly Gill, Comal County ESD#3
- Bob Janusaitis, Comal County ESD#2
- Chief Robert Mikel, Canyon Lake Fire/EMS
- Angela Hemphill, CFO Canyon Lake Fire/EMS
- Charles Richard, Canyon Lake Professional Firefighters Association, #4713

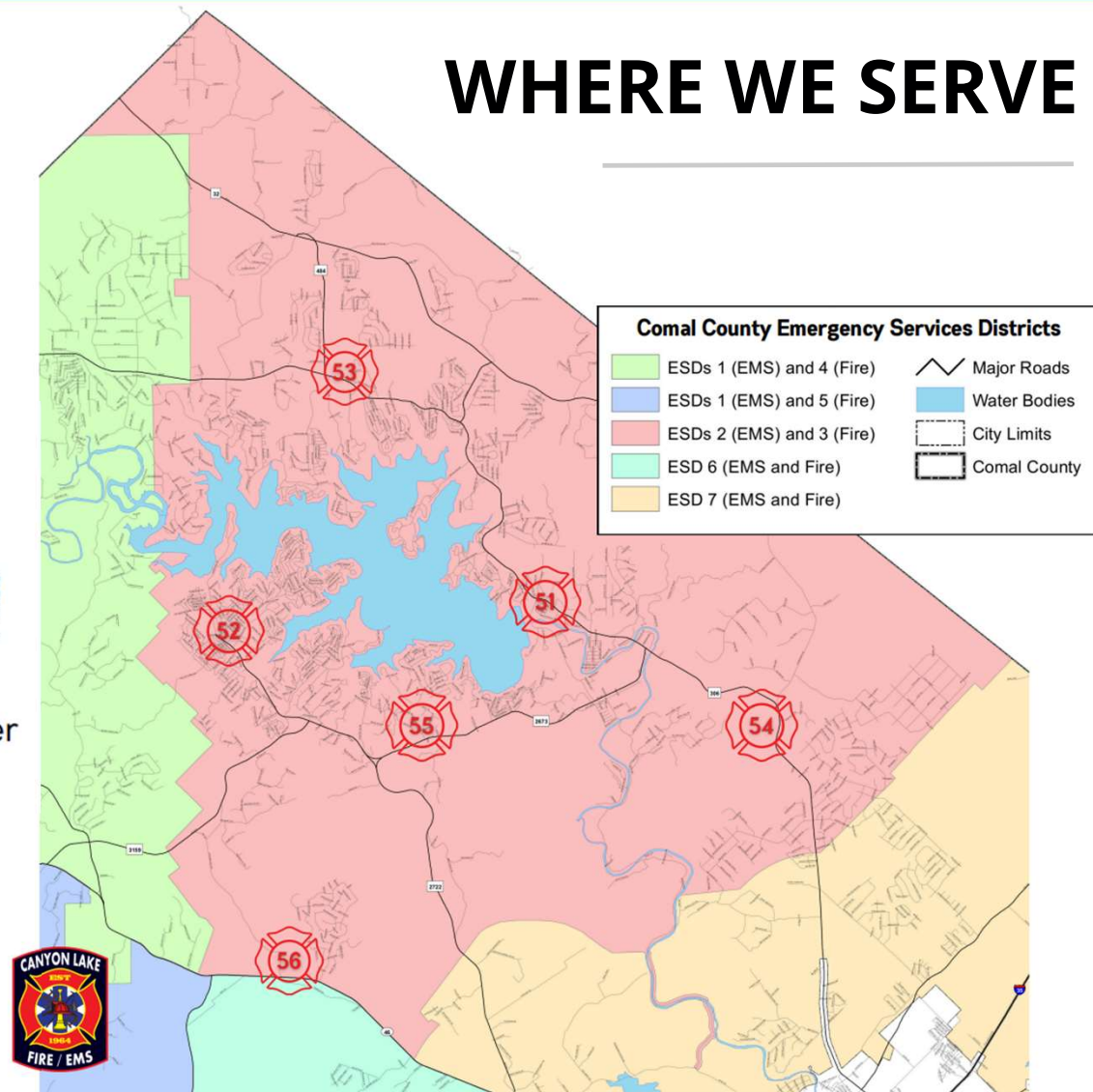
6 Fire & EMS Stations
250 Square Miles

Serving **27K** Permanent Residents
100,000 Peak Holiday Visitors

8,240 Surface Acres
Canyon Lake **80** Miles
PLUS of Shoreline
10 Miles Guadalupe River Access

Station 51 - 1074 Scissortail Canyon Lake, TX 78133
Station 52 - 160 Oblate Canyon Lake, TX 78133
Station 53 - 21750 FM 306 Canyon Lake, TX 78133
Station 54 - 8685 FM 306 New Braunfels, TX 78132
Station 55 - 1223 Island View Drive Canyon Lake, TX 78133
Station 56 - 1150 S Cranes Mill Rd, New Braunfels, TX 78132

WHERE WE SERVE



Our discussion for today

- What went wrong?
 - *Examples we have all experienced*
- What was needed to make it right?
 - *Transparency and Education to have Understanding*
- What were the results?
 - *The partnership mentality...*
- Final words of wisdom

Bob

- Elected vs. appointed Commissioners differing perspectives
- Personal agendas get in the way of the mission, leave your baggage outside
- Be a good listener, there are probably people smarter than you in the room
- Be part of the team by showing it
- Walk in the other's shoes and have them walk in yours

“Public service is a noble calling”

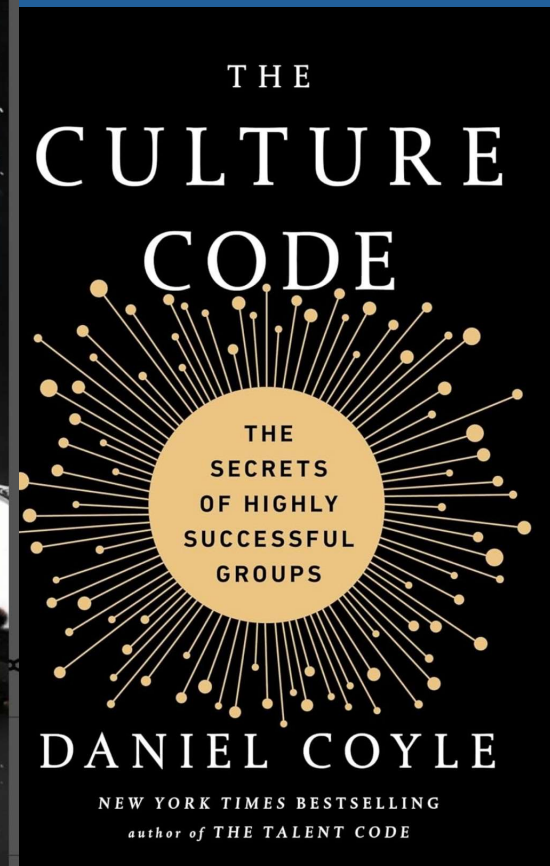
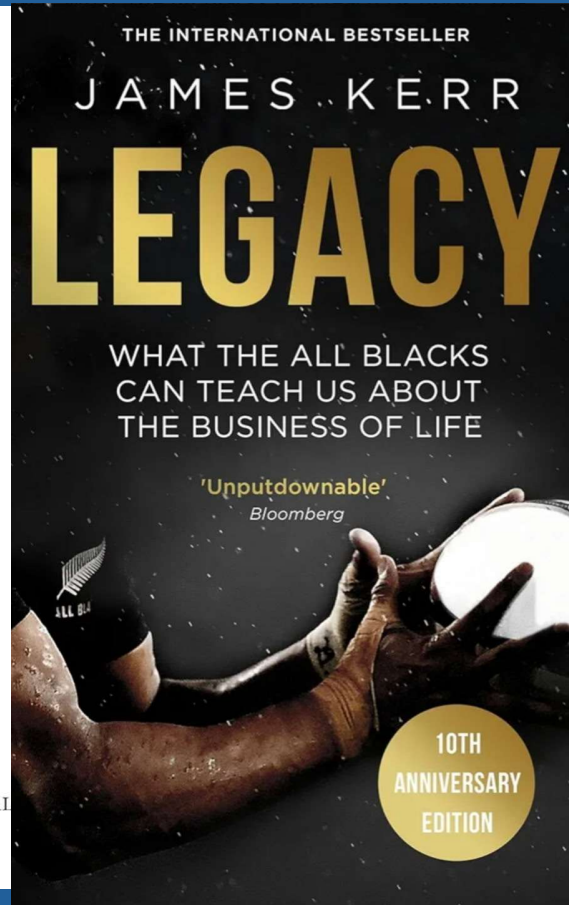
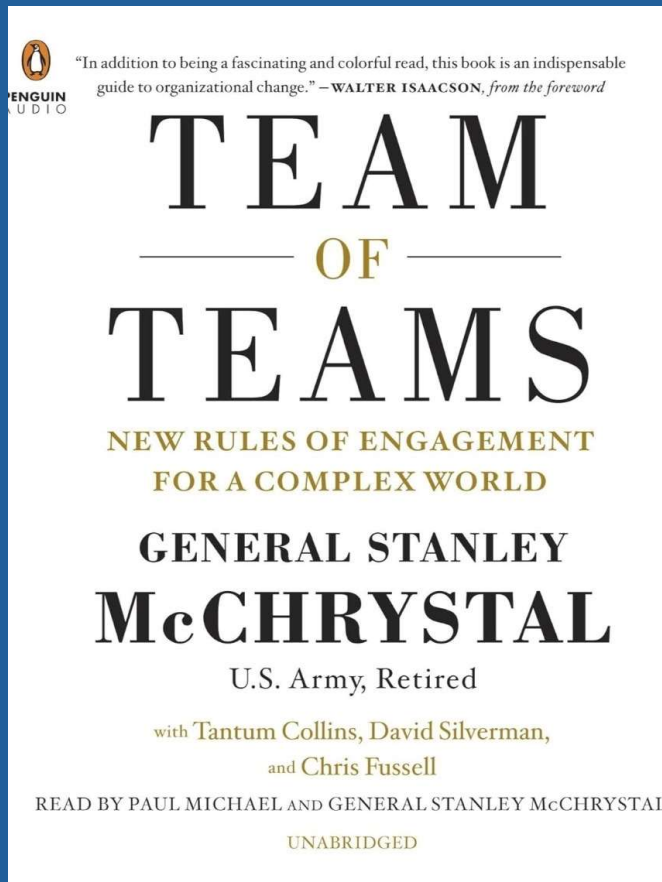
George H. W. Bush

Inter Local Agreement (ILA)

6.3 Meeting Space. ESD 3 will provide adequate space to ESD 2 in an ESD 3 facility to hold public meetings and for secure storage space for ESD 2 files.

Holly





Angela

- Relationship between the two ESD's was strained as they did not work under same mission. Egos and personal agendas was what they operated within.
- Lost sight of the most important purpose of our organization which is taking care of our residents.
- Attempting to mediate between the two was something like divorce mediation even though the two districts needed each other to continue to operate at the level they were.
- This dissension was felt all the way down to the line personnel.

Charles

- Adversarial relationship
- How the relationship was improved
- Involvement with key decisions
- Outreach to the community
- Message to Chiefs and Commissioners

“Progress starts with a conversation”

Chief

- Operational Issues That Result from Ineffective Relationships
- Hire Right
- Shared Goals and Vision
 - Provide High Quality Service in a Fiscally Responsible Manner
 - Sincere Concern for Employees
- Transparency and Difficult Conversations
- Trust

The Culture is Key

Characteristics of a Continuous Improvement Culture *A culture of continuous improvement is a mindset woven into every aspect of your organization. These characteristics are part of what defines — and sustains — this kind of culture.*

- **Shared values** You must instill a belief in the importance of excellence, adaptability, and progress. Each of these values can be reflected in leadership decisions and team dynamics, creating a strong foundation for improvement.
- **Collaborative problem solving** In this type of culture, collaboration is a top priority. Personnel across departments and teams come together to identify areas needing improvement and come up with creative solutions, which often builds a sense of shared ownership over results.
- **Leadership commitment** Commissioners and Chiefs are the driving force behind continuous improvement. Their actions and priorities can set the tone for the organization as a whole, so these leaders must invest in personnel development and actively participate in problem-solving. Their commitment can inspire personnel to embrace change.
- **Transparent Goals** Clearly defined and measurable goals are a key part of improvement. Personnel typically perform better when they understand what the organization is striving to achieve and how their efforts support those objectives.
- **Knowledge Sharing** Breaking down barriers between teams can foster innovation. Open communication and collaboration mean that valuable knowledge is shared freely, allowing for the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.
- **Personnel Involvement** Personnel are closest to the day-to-day processes and often have the best insights into what can be improved. In a CIC environment, personnel are encouraged to experiment with possible solutions. This builds engagement and accountability, which often leads to more successful changes.
- **Failure as an opportunity** Organizations that embrace a continuous improvement culture view failure as a stepping stone rather than a setback. By creating an environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, you can encourage continuous growth.

Resource

- <https://www.cpshr.us/blog-article/continuous-improvement-culture/>

Open discussion

Final Thoughts

Thank you!