**Jasper County Firefighters as well as public works employees have finally completed a busy week-plus, starting with the clean-up of Tropical Storm Irma on Monday, Sept. 11…**Article from Monticello News – Thursday, September 21, 2017

Volunteers and paid personnel worked all day Monday and much of the day Tuesday removing trees and limbs from roads, and doing whatever they could to mitigate storm damage. They finally went home late Tuesday evening. Then, in the wee hours of Wednesday morning, actually 12:53 a.m., four fire stations were paged to a fire at the Jasper County Landfill. Later that morning, all seven stations were paged, and they began working round-the-clock. Firefighters would pour water on the fire, then the public works department (PWD) personnel would bury a portion, and so they went.

They worked until 11 p.m. Wednesday, then quit for rest. Starting at 7 a.m. Thursday, they began rotating personnel and equipment in and out of the fire area so they could remain all the time. Fire Chief Chris Finch, said “we flowed a lot of water.”

They basically kept 350 gallons a minute flowing until Friday midday when Georgia Forestry brought in a super tanker. It was able to use water from the sediment pond to pour on the fire, then the water drained back into the pond to be reused. The pond was blocked so the contaminated water could not flow out. Meanwhile, Thursday afternoon late, when the power came back on, firefighters were called to a structure fire on Late Rise off Jackson Lake Road. That home (top photo) was destroyed by fire in spite of a good response from the fire department. Most responded from the landfill where they were working.

Chief Finch said several of the volunteers stayed out of their regular jobs Wednesday to work on the landfill fire. Some who worked returned to fight the fire after work hours, giving up any time at home for rest and food.  On Thursday morning Morgan County sent a tanker or actually a tender and personnel, then Thursday night, Walton County sent a super tender which could flow 3,000 gallons a minute and more people and trucks from Morgan came. In addition to battling the landfill blaze, fire/rescue personnel responded to all the normal fire and medic calls.

Representatives of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources came in, and everything had to be coordinated and approved by them. Both Chief Finch and County Manager Mike Benton said what they accomplished was outstanding. Landfill Manager Sammy McGowan was present for much of the time, and helped coordinate the firefighting. Even the EPD praised Jasper County for its response. Chief Finch said they never lost water. All in all it was a great job by local employees and volunteers. The photo at right shows a drone photo of the landfill fire taken by the Jasper County Sheriff’s Office.

The landfill fire will continue to smolder underground for a time, indicated Chief Finch, but it should not pose any more problems. The part that burned was about 300 to 400 feet of a 800 foot cell. PWD workers covered it with dirt. Those persons working to fight this fire included: Fire Chief Christopher Finch, Asst. Chief Jarret Slocumb, Battalion Chief Steve Milligan, Battalion Chief Alvin McMichael, Captain Josh Robinson, Captain Carlos Rhodes, Captain Russell Fowler, Lt. Matt Tumlin, Lt. James Futrual, FF Crystal Milligan, FF Luke Steele, FF Tyler McMichael, FF/AEMT Maritsa Bell, FF/AEMT Jannifer Fowler, FF Mary Tumlin, FF Nick Johnston, FF Luke Bales, FF Chris Cabe, FF Steve Bernard, FF Ben Perry, FF Antonia Presley, FF Rob Leggett, FF Blake Robinson, FF Trae Standifer, FF/TRN Jason Cabe, FF/EXP Michael Wilson, FF/EMT-I Keith Haddock, EMT-I Shell Haddock, FF/Paramedic TJ Johnson, FF/Paramedic Kirk Sanders, FF/ Paramedic Suzanne Barrett, FF/EMT-I James Ray, FF/Paramedic Austin Nation, Paramedic Adam Nation, FF/Paramedic Jeff Johnston, Paramedic Roy Perry, FF/Paramedic Lynn Brown, FF/EMT-I Amber Jervis, FF/EMT-I Steve Johnson, and FF/Paramedic Christina Bramlett.

Also, Walton County Fire Rescue – 1 Super Tender: Captain Jeff Allen, FF Clay McCoulough, and FF Eddie Daughtery. Morgan County Fire Rescue – 2 Tenders: Michael Hamilton, Josh Tinseth , Jordon Farrington, Tim Campbell, Bobb Kapp, and Garrett Stinchcomb.

Personnel that covered the fire with over 500 dump truck loads of soil to put the fire out include PWD personnel Kenneth Pope, Gary Shaffer, Wendell Smith, Kenneth McDonald, Greg Robinson, Wendell Pope, Ronald Rooks, Johnny Sands, Karl Jefferson, Mac Arthur Martin, along with County Manager Mike Benton and Landfill Manager Sammy McCowan.