



# LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

**Media Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Lakeland Fire Department Welcomes Eleven New Firefighters

Lakeland, FL - The Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) is pleased to announce the hiring of eleven new firefighters that began duty on Monday, April 4, 2016. The new hires are filling vacancies from recent retirements of longtime LFD veterans and openings left as a result of internal promotions.

The new firefighters are currently experiencing the department's three week orientation program at the Lakeland Fire Department's Training Center located at 901 Granada Street. Although all the new hires are certified firefighters, this training course is designed to teach the new firefighters how to do things the "Lakeland" way. They review a full spectrum of practical skills they need to perform on the job as well as emergency medical training before being released into the field.

The hiring process was selective because of the large pool of applicants. Another opportunity for aspiring firefighters will be available later this year when the department will look to hire additional firefighters to fill retirements anticipated later in the year.

"The selection process was difficult because there were many qualified candidates to choose from. Our hiring committee is confident that it selected the best available candidates and it's comforting to know that the new rookies joining our ranks are highly skilled and qualified to continue providing the high quality emergency services our department is known for." said Training Chief John Almskog, coordinator of the hiring effort and leader of the department's three week orientation program.

Of the eleven new hires, two are already certified paramedics while the other nine are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs); although the nine EMTs will have the opportunity to pursue paramedic training once on the job.

A majority of the new hires hail from central Florida and are graduates of area fire academies like the Ridge Career Center Fire Academy and Hillsborough Community College Fire Academy.

The eleven new firefighters will help reduce current overtime costs to maintain minimum staffing at all stations. The new hires now bring the department to a total of 170 personnel whom, last year alone, responded to nearly 23,000 service calls.

For more information, interview requests with department representatives, filming, etc. please contact PIO Janel Vasallo.

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Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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