



Lakewood Fire District No. 1

316 River Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2019

Subject: Expansion of Career Fire Department

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EXPANSION OF CAREER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners is pleased to announce that the Fire District will be hiring sixteen (16) additional career firefighters over the next two (2) fiscal years. The goal is to have four (4) additional firefighters in place during the first quarter of 2020, with an additional four (4) firefighters hired in the third quarter of the year, increasing the number of career personnel from sixteen (16) to twenty-four (24). Commencing in 2021, the Board plans to hire an additional eight (8) firefighters during the first quarter of the year, bringing the total of career staff to thirty-two (32) firefighters. Once the full complement of thirty-two (32) career firefighters is in place, the Board will have two (2) crews consisting of one (1) officer, promoted from within, and three (3) firefighters on each crew at all times. One (1) crew will be stationed at the Monmouth Avenue fire station and the other at the Cedar Bridge Avenue fire station, twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, complementing the District's outstanding volunteer firefighting force of seventy (70) active members. The Board has taken this action upon the recommendation of the District administrative and professional staff. The hiring schedule will be implemented and accomplished within the imposed fiscal restraints upon the taxpayer. The hiring plan, once complete, will have the following benefits to the community:

- Enhance the provisions of fire protection and fire suppression to the community.
- Provide immediate access to major fire routes.
- Provide for a quick response to emergency incidents considering the traffic patterns in the Township.
- Proximity to Life Hazards – senior residences, large developments, schools, “Downtown” commercial traffic and businesses, corporate buildings, large multi-family apartment buildings, Lakewood airport, industrial areas, etc.
- Proactive response to current as well as future development.

- Additional Fire Officers – implantation of a pre-planning program of residential and commercial buildings, site plan and construction liaison officer, apparatus liaison officer, administrative officer(s), supply liaison officer, training liaison officer, communications liaison officer, etc.

It is important to mention the Fire District has added seven (7) volunteer firefighters this year to their active volunteer firefighting force of seventy (70) members. Furthermore, recruitment of volunteer firefighters and fire-police remains ongoing and the Lakewood Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners, along with the Lakewood Fire Department Fire Chief Mike D'Elia, Jr., continue to seek individuals who have a desire to serve the Lakewood community in one of these capacities. To attract new volunteers, the Board has become involved in the Volunteer Tuition Credit Program established by the State of New Jersey which permits volunteer fire service personnel who are active and in good standing, as well as their spouses and dependent children, to receive tuition credit to a county college, county vocational school or county technical institute. Individuals interested in becoming volunteer firefighters or fire-police are encouraged to visit the Fire District Website at lakewoodfd.org and submit the requested information expressing their interest through the "Join the Lakewood Fire Department" link.

The Fire Commissioners and administrative staff, along with District professionals, have worked tirelessly to address fire service needs so as to efficiently and effectively maximize fire protection within the community. This has been accomplished within the fiscal constraints of the taxpayers. The Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners will continue to address the changing needs of the community and its expanding population and development.