Lakewood Fire District No. 1
733 Cedar Bridge Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 26, 2026

Subject: Statement From Fire Chief Jonathan T. Yahr

Contact: Jonathan T. Yahr, Chief of Department 732-364-5151

STATEMENT FROM FIRE CHIEF JONATHAN T. YAHR

The Lakewood Fire Department has been made aware of a deeply offensive and racially derogatory comment posted on social media by an individual who previously served with the Department.

The Lakewood Fire Department unequivocally condemns the comment. The language and sentiment expressed are offensive, despicable, inappropriate, and wholly inconsistent with the values and standards of this Department.

The individual who made the comment has not been affiliated with or involved in the Lakewood Fire Department since relocating to Florida in 2020. Although he may identify himself on social media by reference to a position he formerly held, he does not presently hold any position with the Department, has no authority to speak on its behalf, and his personal statements should not be attributed to the Department, its leadership, or its current members.

The Lakewood Fire Department serves every member of our community without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, background, or any other distinction. Our firefighters are entrusted with protecting the lives and property of all who live, work, worship, and visit Lakewood, and we take that responsibility seriously. The men and women of this Department work alongside and serve people from every part of Lakewood's diverse community. Racist stereotypes and demeaning commentary have no place in the fire service and do not reflect who we are as a department or the community we serve.

Having been raised in Lakewood and having served this community through the Fire Department for 33 years as a firefighter and 6 years as Fire Chief, I can say unequivocally that these comments do not represent the Lakewood I know, the people who call it home, or the values of this Department.

While the Department cannot control the personal speech of an individual who has not been associated with it for several years, we can, and do, make clear that the comments at issue are not condoned, endorsed, or reflective of the Lakewood Fire Department, its leadership, or its members. We remain committed to professionalism, respect, dignity, and equal service to every person in our community.

Jonathan T. Yahr
Chief Of Department
Lakewood Fire Department

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