



FIRE & EMS NEWS

March 2003

Volume 1 – Issue 9

Welcome to the latest issue of the Fire & EMS News! Some of the highlights of this issue include:

- Firefighter testing opportunities – ***FIREHIRE*** testing process: applications being accepted from March 1 until March 31, 2003
- State budget crisis and how it affects you as a student and future firefighter
- Character traits to help you become a better firefighter candidate and human being
- Free California Fire Service Directory available on the CPF web site!
- Congratulations to various students for moving closer to their goal of becoming a full-time firefighter
- Free Firefighter Oral Interview seminar with Captain Bob!
- EMS Job Opportunity

BAY AREA FIREFIGHTER TESTING OPPORTUNITIES - FIREHIRE

FIREHIRE is going to be accepting applications for Firefighter / EMT and Firefighter / Paramedic positions March 1 through March 31, 2003. If you have an application on file and I is up to date, then you do not need to submit another one. Please remember to get your application postmarked by March 31, 2003. You do not need to send it next day mail. All you need to do is get it postmarked. For a list of departments that will be hiring off of this list, take a look at the list on the next page.

Benefits of taking this test include:

- You're only taking one test (as opposed to separate tests for each fire department)
- The hiring list will be in effect for one year
- There is a chance other fire departments will hire off of this list

To participate in the entry-level firefighter examination process, you must possess or meet the following minimum requirements:

- High school diploma or GED
- At least 18 years old
- California Drivers License – Class “C”
- Proof of citizenship or legal ability to work in the U.S.

Some of the fire departments might have other requirements (view the firehire web site at <http://www.firehire.com> for more specific information) such as:

- EMT
- Paramedic
- Firefighter – 1 Academy
- Firefighter – 1 Certificate

For application materials or more information, visit their website at <http://www.firehire.com> or if you do not have internet access, call them at 1-800-755-5891.

The examination process consists of the following:

- Completion of the application packet that is sent to you by FIREHIRE
- Written examination – 130 question test which you must pass with a score of at least 70%. There are 65 EMT questions from the AAOS Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured, 7th Edition textbook, and 65 firefighter questions from the IFSTA Essentials of Firefighting, 4th Edition textbook. This portion of the exam is weighted 75% of your total score. **The Written examination is scheduled to be given on Saturday May 3, 2003 at The College of San Mateo South Cafeteria in San Mateo.**
 - There is a written examination study guide that you can purchase for \$15.00 on their website at http://www.firehire.com/pay_options.htm - It was developed specifically for the FIREHIRE written exam.
- Physical Ability Test – this portion is pass / fail. **The Physical Ability Test will be tentatively administered on May 13, 14, and 15, 2003 at the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department Training Facility in Pleasanton, California.** You will be assigned a date and time; they will not be able to change dates or times unless it is an EXTREME hardship. It consists of the following events:
 - 35 Foot ladder extension / retraction exercise
 - Pike Pole exercise
 - Hose load/unload exercise
 - Ladder manipulation exercise
 - Hose manipulation exercise
 - Rescue exercise
 - Cardiovascular (step test) exercise
- Emergency Medical Assessment Center – this event consists of a patient involved in a trauma and/or medical setting. **The EMT Assessment Center will be held on May 24th and 25th, 2003 at the San Carlos City Hall in San Carlos.** The treatment is commensurate with your level of training. There are critical care criteria points that must be addressed or it is an AUTOMATIC FAILURE. You are graded on the criteria established by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. This event is weighted 25% of your total score.

The following fire departments are expected to be participating (based on the information I had available at the time I printed this document) in this recruitment and will be using the list that is established to hire for open positions:

Fire Department

- Albany Fire Department –
- Burlingame Fire Department –
- El Cerrito Fire Department –
- Foster City Fire Department –
- Fremont Fire Department –
- Half Moon Bay Fire District –
- Millbrae Fire Department –
- Novato Fire Protection District –
- Oroville Fire Department –
- Petaluma Fire Department –
- Piedmont Fire Department –
- Redwood City Fire Department –
- Ross Valley Fire Authority –
- San Bruno Fire Department –
- San Mateo Fire Department –
- San Rafael Fire Department –
- San Ramon Fire Protection District –
- South County Fire Authority –
- Woodside Fire District –

Positions available

Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter
Firefighter/Paramedic
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Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/EMT & Firefighter/Paramedic
Firefighter/Paramedic

NOTE: For information about each of the above fire departments, go to the Chabot College Fire Technology and EMS web site links page at <http://chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/sprziborowski/Links.htm> - Numerous fire departments throughout the Bay Area, the State of California, and the United States are listed there.

I believe that the **Fremont Fire Department** is the only Fire Department **NOT** requiring EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter 1 Academy, or Firefighter 1 Certification. So you have no excuse to NOT take the exam, even if you are just starting out! Do not take my word for it, go to their website for the most up to date information.

To join the FREE FIREHIRE mailing list and find out about their latest updates, go to http://www.firehire.com/mail_list.htm

STATE BUDGET CRISIS

Many of you are probably aware of the severe budget crisis that the State of California is experiencing as well as facing in the months ahead. If you are not aware of this situation, then

you need to educate yourself on what is going on and realize how it can and will affect you as a student and a future firefighter.

As a student, some of the things you may be seeing are a possible increase in college fees, a possible lack of availability of the latest and greatest equipment in the classrooms, and a possible reduction in classes and/or sections offered. This semester, I was given the task to eliminate one class. That was not an easy choice, or something I wanted to do. In reality, I would have liked to actually increase the number and type of course offerings, not decrease them. I would have liked to say “no way,” but that was not an option.

Most divisions were expected to eliminate at least one class. The class I chose was the Fire Technology 65 course. The reason I chose that class was because Las Positas was also offering it this semester, and because it was no longer be a prerequisite to get into the firefighter 1 academy beginning in the Fall of this year and would in turn, be offered at the end of every firefighter 1 academy. So in reality, of all the choices, this was probably the one that had the least impact on the average student and the program in general.

As for how this reduction in class offerings will fare for the summer and fall semesters, I am still not 100% sure. I would have liked to offer a fire technology course or two this summer, but that is not in the cards. As of now, the only two classes we will be offering are Health 61 (Emergency Response) and Fire Technology 95/96 (Fire Department work experience). I realize many of you would love to take summer classes to get things going and keep your momentum, so I understand if this is frustrating. Realize it is just as frustrating for me! As for the fall semester, I just completed the scheduling and it looks like we should have the same class offerings as we had last fall (those familiar with budgeting understand that in tight times, it is incredible to be able to at least keep the same amount of something you had the year before; because the alternative would be that we would be doing some cutting back).

As for how this budget crisis will affect you the future firefighter, we will have to wait and see. Some fire departments have already been hit with having to do drastic reductions such as “rolling blackouts” where they close fire stations on a rotating basis so they do not have to pay overtime to staff them. While we may not agree with that idea, how many options is a Fire Chief left with when their boss, usually the City Manager directs (a.k.a. orders) them to reduce a few million dollars in a few months? What other options are left? While many departments will see an increase in retirements over the next few years due to the PERS 3 % at 50 retirement benefit that is being negotiated by fire department labor organizations around the state (thus opening up more vacancies for entry-level firefighters), the real test is how quickly departments go about replacing the firefighters that have retired. Many times, budgets can be reduced through attrition (not replacing retired firefighters) and just filling those spots with overtime everyday.

What does this mean for you – the future firefighter candidate? ***DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE OR YOUR DREAM OF BECOMING A FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTER!*** Yes, it might be true that some departments might not be rushing out to replace retired firefighters, increasing their staffing to four-person engine companies and/or four or five-person truck companies, or opening

additional fire stations where there are long response times. Firefighters will still be hired, maybe just not in the large numbers many people predicted when the PERS 3 % at 50 retirement benefit was introduced. Don't despair; just try harder to prepare yourself to be the best candidate you can be! Put yourself in the shoes of a Fire Chief who has to make hiring decisions in these tough times. I think you would be looking for the best candidates who have the best knowledge, skills, and abilities to offer (not that you wouldn't already be doing that; you will just be more picky about whom you hire) such as:

- EMT Certification
- Paramedic Licensure
- Formal educational degrees (2 year degrees, 4 year degrees)
- Proven track record of community service
- Bilingual ability
- Firefighter 1 academy and Firefighter 1 certification
- Specialized training classes (Haz Mat technician / specialist, Rescue Systems I and II, Confined Space Operations, Swift Water Rescue, etc.)
- EMT and/or paramedic experience on an ambulance
- Volunteer or Reserve firefighter experience
- Clean driving record (tickets and accidents)
- Good employment history
- Etc.

So if you had thought about doing any or most of the above items (which I hope you had) and weren't exactly sure if they were worth your time or money, then think again and actually go for it! Those candidates that are going to have the most success are going to be the ones that can "put their money where their mouth is" by proving they are motivated and qualified to become firefighters through their actions, not their words.

FREE FIRE SERVICE DIRECTORY - Courtesy of the California Professional Firefighters

The California Professional Firefighters (CPF) website, <http://www.cpf.org> has a new feature that I think most, if not all of us, can benefit from. They have compiled a fire service directory that includes every fire department in the State of California. Information contained in this directory includes department addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and website addresses. I highly suggest you take a look for yourself and even consider downloading the entire document to keep in your research binder that you should have already started by now. To download a copy of the directory, free of charge, go to: <http://www.cpf.org/fddirectory.jsp>

CHARACTER COUNTS! – The Six Pillars of Character

I discovered this on the internet and I think it worth sharing with everyone. Character is one of the most important traits of an individual; especially someone that is striving for a career in public service and working for the government. It was located on a website for the Josephson Institute of Ethics at <http://www.charactercounts.org> and the items I would like to share are "The Six Pillars of Character." Most oral boards are inquiring about your character, integrity, and

ethics; this website has some valuable (and free) suggestions to offer you that can maybe help you better answer those types of questions.

Every fire department is looking for honest, ethical individuals with excellent character traits. These are items that I feel every one of us (including myself) should consistently look at and evaluate how well we are actually contributing to society in a positive way.

The Six Pillars of Character:

1. TRUSTWORTHINESS

- Be honest
- Don't deceive, cheat or steal
- Be reliable – do what you say you'll do
- Have the courage to do the right thing
- Build a good reputation
- Be loyal – stand by your family, friends and country

2. RESPECT

- Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use of good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- Do what you are supposed to do
- Persevere; keep on trying!
- Always do your best
- Use self-control
- Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act – consider the consequences
- Be accountable for your choices

4. FAIRNESS

- Play by the rules
- Take turns and share
- Be open minded; listen to others
- Don't take advantage of others
- Don't blame others carelessly

5. CARING

- Be compassionate and show you care
- Be kind

- Express gratitude
- Forgive others
- Help people in need

6. CITIZENSHIP

- Do your share to make your school and community better
- Cooperate
- Stay informed; vote
- Be a good neighbor
- Obey laws and rules
- Respect authority
- Protect the environment

Take some time to reflect on the above words and thoughts. Can you honestly say that you are doing as many of those as you can? Nobody is perfect. As a firefighter serving and working for a community, you are expected to be the best you can be. Strive to be an asset, not a liability. Use these thoughts to help guide your life and keep them in mind when you are participating in an oral interview and your every day life. None of us are perfect or have never made a mistake. What matters is that we have not made the same mistake twice, that we have learned from our mistakes, and that we are able to accept accountability and responsibilities for our actions.

*I challenge you to better yourself everyday and try to make a positive difference in your life or someone else's life **EVERY DAY!*** The individuals we protect and serve by providing service to within our communities deserve and expect the best; let's not let them down.

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER FOR THE FOLLOWING CHABOT STUDENTS

The following students were accepted in the Alameda County Fire Department Reserve Firefighter program:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| • Michael DeBenning | • Andrew Kim |
| • Brian Ferreira | • Sean Maloney |
| • Steve Hickey | • Matthew Thau |

Let's wish all of them the best of luck! If there are any other names that I have left out, please let me know so I can include them in the next issue. Congratulations on getting one step closer to your dream of becoming a full-time firefighter! Make the best of this incredible opportunity!

FREE FIREFIGHTER ORAL INTERVIEW SEMINAR!

On Wednesday May 7, "Captain Bob" Smith will be doing another free oral interview seminar from 6 pm until 8 pm at Chabot College. More information will follow in the April 2003 issue of the Chabot College Fire & EMS News. Mark your calendars and take advantage of this free opportunity to learn more about becoming a better firefighter candidate!

EMS JOB OPPORTUNITY!

Fast Response in Berkeley is looking for EMT's, Paramedics, Nurses, and other medical professionals (or students in the above fields) to teach CPR / First Aid, ACLS, PALS, and CEU courses. They will train you! Looks great on your resume! This is a part-time opportunity with flexible hours and a great way to earn extra income. For more information call 510-849-4009.

CLOSING COMMENTS

I hope you have found this newsletter somewhat valuable. If you have learned one new thing, then I think I've done my job. I truly want to see everyone succeed, and I also really enjoy doing what I do. This program is your program. It can only get better with your assistance. There is an old saying, don't just give me problems – give me solutions! I can't read your minds, so please provide me with feedback. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want me to clarify any rumors you might have heard. Thank you very much!

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Chabot College web site: <http://www.chabotcollege.edu>

***** PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS OR CO-WORKERS*****

The Fine Print:

- If you would like to be added to our mailing list (no, I won't give your email address out to others), email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will add you to the list. Benefits of being on the mailing list include being notified when the latest Fire & EMS news is published, and being notified of firefighter testing opportunities, volunteer opportunities, or training opportunities.
- If you know of someone who wants to receive this newsletter (as well as other updates), email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will place them on the mailing list.
- If you want to take your name off of the mailing list, just send me an email at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and in the subject heading, and type in "unsubscribe from mailing list" and I will remove your name.