



FIRE & EMS NEWS

December 2002

Volume 1 – Issue 6

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Fire & EMS News! It is hard to imagine another year is almost finished. I hope everyone is getting closer to their dream of becoming a full-time firefighter and not giving up hope! Remember, once you give up - you give up, and lose every opportunity you worked so hard for. Believe me, persistence pays off! I've never known anyone to not get a firefighter position as long as they kept taking tests and better preparing themselves.

I have known countless people that just stopped testing or putting any effort into becoming a firefighter; and then complain that they never got hired for this reason, or that reason (not taking any responsibility for themselves and their actions), and always looking back into their past saying "if only I did this, or if only this happened, or if only this had not happened," etc. Do you want to be one of those people? I hope not. The fire service is always looking for motivated people that are not willing to give up their dream and are always to do what it takes to get something accomplished.

Firefighter Job opening! – Alameda County Fire Department

The Alameda County Fire Department is currently recruiting for the position of Firefighter!

Final Filing Date: Friday December 20, 2002 at 4:30 p.m.

Positions: Firefighter / EMT and Firefighter / Paramedic

Requirements: To apply, applicants **must meet at least one** of the following requirements:

- Licensed Paramedic
- Experience as a Firefighter / EMT or Firefighter / Paramedic in a paid fire department
- Current member of the Alameda County Fire Department volunteers

To Apply: Applications may be obtained at Alameda County Human Resources, 1405 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA 94612. The application is also available on their web site at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us>

More Information: View the job flier at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us>

Congratulations are in order to the following individual:

- **Brian Stewart** has been hired as a *Firefighter / Paramedic* with the *San Francisco Fire Department*. Brian is on our instructional staff as one of the EMT instructors, as well as a substitute instructor for the Fire Technology program.

Fire Department Profile – PIEDMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

***** DEPARTMENT INFORMATION *****

Headquarters:

Piedmont Fire Department
120 Vista Avenue
Piedmont, CA 94611-4031
510.420.3030 – Business number

Personnel / Human Resource Office:

City of Piedmont, City Hall
120 Vista Avenue
Piedmont, CA 94611-4031
510.420.3036 – Office number

- Fire Department web site: <http://www.ci.piedmont.ca.us>
- City web site: <http://www.ci.piedmont.ca.us>

Population: **12-14,000** Square miles: **7** I.S.O. Rating: **3** F.D. Budget: **\$3 million**
Level of EMS: **ALS** ALS capabilities on: **Engines, the Truck, the Ambulance**
Ambulance transportation provided by: **F.D. Ambulance**
Dispatching services provided by: **City of Piedmont Police Department**
I.A.F.F. Union Local #: **2683** Union President: **Ron Alexander**
Total calls last year: **991** EMS calls: **80% +** Fire calls: **10%** Other: **10%**

STATIONS / APPARATUS:

Fire stations: **1** Number of staffed Engines: **1** Number of staffed Trucks: **1**
Number of Battalions: **N/A** Number of staffed Ambulances: **1**
Primary apparatus manufacturer: **Pierce**

STAFFING: (Personnel on each type of apparatus)

Engine: **2-3** Truck: **3** Ambulance: **2** Minimum # of personnel on duty each shift: **7**

PERSONNEL:

Total personnel: **25** Number of uniformed personnel: **24**
Fire Chief: **John Speakman**
Training Officer: **Captain Bud McLaren**
EMS Coordinator: **Captain Scott Baringer**
Fire Marshal: **Captain Scott Baringer**
Number of Captains: **3** Number of Engineers: **3** Number of Firefighters: **6**
Number of Firefighter/Paramedics: **9**
Fire Investigation duties performed by: **Piedmont Police Department**
Public Education duties performed by: **All three shifts of firefighters**
Volunteer or Reserve Firefighter program? **No**

BENEFIT INFORMATION:

Type of retirement system/formula: **PERS – 2% at 50** Paid by employee? **No (Paid by City)**
Medical benefits – paid by employee? **No (Paid by City)**
Type of shift worked: **2 / 4 schedule (48 hours on, 96 hours off)**

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:

Testing process consists of: **Written test, Physical Ability Test, Oral interview, Background investigation, Medical examination, Chief's oral interview, Polygraph**

Last tested: **CPS/Firehire lists (2001)** Number hired off last test: **6**
Present vacancies: **0** Length of fire academy: **12 weeks** Length of probation: **18 months**
Projected future vacancies: **Varied**

MISCELLANEOUS:

Major Target Hazards: **Ace Hardware, Gas Station, Several small commercial buildings**
Type of area served: **Residential**
Future fire stations planned: **None**
First alarm assignment: **1 Engine, 1 Truck, 1 Ambulance (All staffed apparatus)**
Second alarm assignment: **Mutual Aid**

Special thanks go to Piedmont Fire Department Captain Bud McLaren for his assistance by providing this information!

Volunteer Opportunities

Here is an area that many of you need to probably improve on. How many of you can honestly say you are spending at least a few hours a month performing volunteer work? If you are not, you need to re-evaluate your priorities and see what you need to do to modify your schedule to accommodate some community service time. I know we all are very busy – who isn't? Why is this so important? Because most (if not all) fire departments want firefighters that are motivated towards performing community service time (not the type that you receive if you've committed a crime and have to pick up trash on the freeway with the orange vest on). Also, this is another way to set you apart from the next candidate. Say a fire department requires an EMT certificate and a Firefighter 1 academy certificate to take their test. That means all candidates have the same certificates. Now how do you set yourself apart from them and show you are a better prepared and better motivated candidate? Some do it through being bilingual, some do it by being a paramedic, some do it through their volunteer experience, etc. Get my point?

Being a firefighter means that you are a public servant and always there to serve your community. Many fire department union locals (when you join a fire department, you are usually expected to become a union member as well) expect their members to perform volunteer community service work on their days off. Why? Well who do you think pays your salary, approves your raises, approves your staffing levels, etc.? The community you work for. That means you need to

maintain a positive working relationship with the community and the community leaders. One of the ways a fire department union local does this is through volunteering at various community events such as barbeques, annual festivals, campaigning for political candidates, etc.

People ask me what type of volunteer work they should do. I don't care – just do something! Something is better than nothing! Remember that you want to stand out from the next candidate and be unique. Here is a way to be unique. Many candidates think that being a volunteer firefighter is perfect and all they need to do. How many candidates are volunteer firefighters? I bet more than ones that volunteer at soup kitchens or homeless shelters? Do you want to be like everyone else, or be different? Remember that the oral board is always looking for something different, as opposed to the same old thing from every candidate.

For an idea of what you can do to volunteer your time, go to the **volunteer opportunities** section on our website at <http://chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/sprziborowski/VolOpps.htm> - where I have a variety of ideas for you to pick from.

One local fire department recently asked candidates during their oral interview, “What type of volunteer work do you participate in.” What would your answer be? I bet most candidates had trouble with that one. Here is a question that can really set you apart from the other candidates. If you had properly prepared yourself by finding and performing volunteer work, this would have been a no-brainer.

Holiday gifts that keep on giving!

With the holidays coming up, here are some suggestions when people ask what they should get you:

1. **Subscription to various Fire Service related publications such as:**
 - a. Firehouse magazine – <http://www.firehouse.com>
 - b. Fire Engineering magazine – <http://www.fire-eng.com>
 - c. Fire Chief magazine – <http://www.firechief.com>
 - d. American Fire Journal – <http://www.americanfirejournal.com>
 - e. Fire Apparatus Journal – <http://www.fireapparatusjournal.com>
 - f. Journal of Emergency Services (JEMS) – <http://www.jems.com>

2. **Subscription to one or more Firefighter testing services that notify you when fire departments are testing:**
 - a. Perfect Firefighter Candidate – <http://www.firecareers.com>
 - b. Careers in the Fire Service – <http://www.firerecruit.com>

3. **Gift certificates to businesses that sell fire & EMS related books:**
 - a. Firefighters Bookstore – <http://www.firebooks.com>
 - b. FSP Books and Video – <http://www.fire-police-ems.com>

4. **Association memberships:**

- a. California Firefighters Association (CSFA) – <http://www.csfa.net>
- b. California Conference of Arson Investigators – <http://www.arson.org>
- c. Women in the Fire Service – <http://www.wfsi.org>
- d. Northern California Fire Prevention Officers Association – <http://www.norcal-fpo.org>

5. **Gym membership:**

- a. Pick a gym that provides a full compliment of work out equipment and facilities so when asked how you have prepared yourself for the position, you can comment how you have joined a gym and have a workout plan in place (goes back to preparation and motivation).

6. **Thomas Brothers Maps:**

- a. If you have never heard what about a Thomas Brothers Map, then you have missed out on a valuable resource. Thomas Brothers Maps produce maps of specific counties throughout California and parts of the United States. Thomas Brothers Maps can be found at any major book store chain or on their web site at <http://www.thomas.com> – take a look to see for yourself. If you are a Costco member, they usually have them available for a very reasonable price.
- b. Why are they so valuable?
 - Number 1 – to become a firefighter, you are probably going to be doing a great deal of driving around the area if not the state and you'll need a map anyway.
 - Number 2 – when you take a test for a fire department, you should be doing some basic research such as stopping by fire stations or determining what types of target hazards are found in a community, etc. Besides target hazards, Thomas Brothers Maps list every governmental facility such as fire stations, police stations, city hall, etc. These maps can do a portion of your homework for you!
 - Number 3 – they are in a book format, thus they won't be easily damaged like regular fold-out maps will.
 - Number 4 – since many fire departments and ambulance companies use Thomas Brothers Maps in their vehicles, you will be getting a leg up on learning. Reading maps is almost like a lost art in the fire service. Many of the new firefighters we are hiring cannot read a map to save their life. When someone calls 911, we don't have every address memorized in our head – 99.9% of the time, we have to use a map to find the address. Start your training now!
- c. What types of maps do they sell? They usually produce a map of a county or multiple counties, such as:
 - Alameda County
 - Contra Costa County
 - Alameda County and Contra Costa County (Best value – 2 counties in one book)
 - Bay Area Metropolitan Area – All bay area counties in one book (Excellent value)
 - State of California (an excellent book to supplement your other county books)

Even if you don't get what you want for the holidays doesn't mean you can't invest in some of the above areas to better prepare yourself for your future career as a firefighter. To make money, you have to spend money. I'm not saying you're going to get rich being a firefighter – I'm just using a phrase that has been around for a long time. It basically means success in life doesn't usually fall into your lap. You're going to have to invest some time and money to get you where you want in life.

Web Sites of the Month

Fire Department:	Berkeley Fire Department – www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/fire
City Web Site:	City of Berkeley – www.ci.berkeley.ca.us
Ambulance Company:	Priority One Ambulance Company – www.priorityonemedical.com
Fire / EMS Publication:	Fire Chief Magazine – www.firechief.com
Fire Organization:	California Conference of Arson Investigators (CCAI) – www.arson.org
EMS Organization:	National Association of EMT's – www.naemt.org

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 and HAPPY HOLIDAYS – Stay safe!**

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

The Fine Print:

- If you know of someone who wants to receive the 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, type in "unsubscribe from mailing list" and I will remove your name.