

Fire Department launches recruitment efforts

The San José Fire Department opened a new recruitment office in April, in an effort to reach out to all City residents — even employees — interested in becoming firefighters.

Russell Hayden, formerly the public information officer for the Fire Department, is the new Recruitment Officer. He will be doing outreach anywhere and everywhere high quality potential firefighters might be found.

While there are many applicants each year, the trick is to find applicants who have top-notch qualifications and who will be able to pass the rigorous 13-week training academy, Hayden says. The City has about 700 firefighters and hires for about 50 openings per year.

Hayden will spend much of his time speaking to large groups in other communities, spreading the word about the San José Fire Department and firefighting careers in general.

His strong recruitment efforts will reach the broadest spectrum of potential applicants. The goal is to ensure that our Fire service maintains its consistent high standards and to make sure that, by doing outreach to every

potential employee, the men and women providing fire protection in San José reflect the diversity of the community we serve.

This is the first time the City of San José has had a recruitment officer dedicated to the Fire Department, but the concept is not new. Many other large cities have recruitment programs in place.

The initial effort was augmented, like so many other successful City efforts, by a public-private partnership. Adobe Systems donated computer equipment for the new recruitment office, as well as a new van. Dan Smith Plastering provided the flooring. And two local residents, Joseph Cauchi and Daniel Martin, volunteered their time and energy to paint the office.

The new recruitment office is based at the 201 North Market Street Fire Station.

Current employees interested in firefighting should look into the Fire Department's internship program.



Russell Hayden is the City's Fire Recruitment Officer

Through this program, employees can get a good look at the workings of the Fire Department by volunteering just five hours per week.

For more information on the internship program and employment opportunities with the Fire Department, call 277-FIRE; e-mail: ru4sjfd@aol.com; or check out the department's website: www.sjfd.com.



Do you have what it takes?

Firefighting is a demanding job — both mentally and physically. To become a San José firefighter, applicants must meet the basic qualifications (high school diploma or completion of G.E.D.) and successfully complete a 13-week Firefighter Recruit Academy.

The academy teaches new recruits proficiency in six areas:

- Working With Fire Hoses: how to properly load, drop and hook up supply lines.
- Ladders: These can be difficult and dangerous to maneuver.
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus: Recruits wear the air packs often to become comfortable with them.

■ Power Tools: These are being used more frequently to cut into building walls, roofs and cars to gain access during emergencies.

■ Search: How to search a burning building for victims.

■ Specialty Areas: These include wildland fires, hazardous materials and medical. Note: All firefighters must complete EMT or paramedic training.

In addition to these areas, recruits also learn about human relations, being a good employee and working as part of a team. Recruits must pass a series of written, hands-on and physical exams, as well as a final exam for medical training.