



# **FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION**

For and About the Employees of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department

## **JFRD Charts as 16th Busiest Department in 'Firehouse' Poll**

### ***Engine 19 Ranks 29th Busiest in Firehouse Magazine Survey***

FDNY, Chicago, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, and Houston are the five busiest departments in the country, according to Firehouse Magazine's annual run survey. New York responded to 1,525,260 calls in 2017, Chicago reported 894,237, Los Angeles' county and city departments combined for 887,302, and Houston had 341,722 calls. JFRD's 155,349 calls for service moved our national ranking to 16th busiest in 2017, compared to 18th in 2016 with 142,889 calls. Other Florida depart-

ments in the top 25 busiest include Miami-Dade County with 261,054 runs, Palm Beach County with 139,947 runs and Orange County with 122,412 runs.

The survey also records busiest units, and JFRD's Engine 19 ranked 29th with 4,947 calls for service. See related story below. San Francisco, California's Engine 3 was busiest nationally with 10,892 runs. Florida's busiest engine is Engine 51 in Orange County. It had 6,264 runs in 2017.

## **Chief's Corner**

In 2014, JFRD was listed in Firehouse Magazine as the 20th busiest department in the country. For 2017, we moved up to 16th busiest. This is a source of pride, but it's also a challenge. Generally speaking, national call volumes have been trending upward as our entire country grapples with overdoses, natural disasters and an aging population.

Cities of all sizes across the United States have been trying to create solutions to address demands for service while also managing limited resources and response units. The pull on emergency services as a whole has been exponentially increasing decade after decade. Mayor Curry and City Council have continued to address Jacksonville's issue by funding additional fire stations and new rescue units to meet the demand. See page 5 for a snapshot of JFRD's proposed 2018-19 budget.

With all the new units, come the new firefighters, and this is where Eng. Thomas Rooney's leadership column on page 4 really hits home. He provides valuable perspective on preparing our new folks for the challenges that lie ahead. Making an investment in our next generation will also yield returns for you, the department and the people we serve.

As city leaders do their part to provide our department with the necessary resources for the increasing demand, each of us would do well to follow Eng. Rooney's example and make sure we are doing our part to ensure that JFRD will continue to deliver world class service to our great city.

**Kurt Wilson**  
Chief of Department

## **Take a Ride on the Night Train**



Just get on the truck.

That's Capt. Matt Williams' motto when he considers riding one of JFRD's busiest engines for the last 13 years.

"I've never been one to count," said Williams, which may explain why he's happy at Station 19, also known as "The Night Train."

One number Williams does recall is 506, the record-setting number of runs Engine 19 experienced last Septem-



**Eng. Moises Innes checks Engine 19's compartments in between early evening calls. In 2017, Engine 19 was JFRD's busiest combat unit, and that statistic only furthered its long-standing reputation for serving a very active district and adjacent territories.**

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# Riding into Eternity

Family, friends, JFRD retirees and active duty members attended the July 12 funeral service for Chief John F. Bailey who joined JFRD in 1960 and spent most of his career in rescue. Before he passed away July 7, Chief Bailey requested that his remains be transported to Riverside Memorial Park off of Normandy Boulevard in the original Rescue 10, which was one of his assignments during his 30-year career. His grandson, Brandon Bailey (RHB-5), drove the 1969 rescue to the cemetery.

For a few hours on July 12, the all-white, late 1960s version of Rescue 10 was back in service, carrying one of our department's biggest fans of history.



**John F. Bailey**

On the day of his funeral, the remains of Chief John F. Bailey rode in the unit, courtesy one of the beloved man's final requests. He passed away on July 7 at age 82. His grandson, Rehab 5's Eng. Brandon Bailey, drove the unit from Evangel Temple Assembly of God on Ramona Boulevard to Riverside Memorial Park off of Normandy Boulevard as part of a JFRD-led procession.

Chief Bailey joined JFRD in 1960 and retired in January 1991, according to City of Jacksonville records. He served in rescue the majority of his career, including an assignment to the original Rescue 10. Bailey was also among the first wave of paramedics licensed in the state of Florida in the late 1970s. His paramedic card number was 28. Bailey enjoyed collecting training manuals, log books, documents from the Rescue Division's formative days, and magazines about the fire service. He even retained drug inventory records from when JFRD was first allowed to carry medicine.

The 1969 Rescue 10 is from the second wave of units that JFRD ordered during the Rescue Division's infancy from the Swab Wagon Company in Pennsylvania. Decades later, JFRD Capt. Danny Cribbs, now retired, rediscovered the old unit in a local shipyard after spotting it while traveling on one of the downtown bridges. Cribbs visited the shipyard and ultimately facilitated the rescue unit's return to JFRD as well as its subsequent restoration, which included labeling by JFRD retiree Rick Bass. And, though it's easy to overlook, the Swab company-issued identification plate



(photo left) is still mounted on the patient compartment. It's stamped with unit number "JFD • 10" and manufacture date "8 • 69."

The antique unit has appeared in numerous local parades and was part of the Jacksonville Fire Museum's exhibit.



# JFRD and USCG at Sea



*Photo by Lt. Eric Prosswimmer*

In late July, the United States Coast Guard (Station Mayport and Air Station Savannah) participated in a patient basket hoist drill with JFRD's Marine Unit, including vessels from stations 38, 39 and 40. Two of JFRD's boats completed two evolutions of receiving and returning the rescue basket to the Coast Guard helicopter. JFRD participants included Chief Gary Kuehner, Capt. William Hood, Capt. Pete Ironside, Capt. Tammi Reyes, Capt. Danny Rushing, Lt. Nelson Fernandez, Eng. Scott Baker, Eng. Ross Currington, Eng. Art Frazier, Eng. Greg Grimes, Eng. Mark Pena, Eng. Brittany Schetrompf, Eng. Terrence Simmons, Firefighter Arthur Love and Firefighter James Misora.

## 'Night Train' Remains a Very Busy Ride

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ber, when Jacksonville had a formidable visitor. While Hurricane Irma influenced the department's calls volumes that month, Engine 19 has historically charted in the top 5 busiest combat units. It was JFRD's busiest engine in 2017 with 4,947 runs; it was second in 2016 with 4,869; and third in 2015 with 4,669. Those numbers last year prompted JFRD's administration to introduce E-119 into the mix when staffing allows. "We appreciate every time we get to use it," said Williams, who is on A-shift.

Rescue 19 is also among the top 5 busiest rescues. In 2017, R-19 responded to 4,515 calls for service. In 2016, it had 4,530 runs.

Nationally, according to Firehouse Magazine's 2017 Run Survey, Engine 19 charted as the 29th busiest engine in a poll of 259 paid departments.

Williams understands that busy isn't for everyone. At one point this year, he was the only combat officer permanently assigned to 19. What he enjoys about his station is the variety of calls and the people he works with. That would include Firefighter Jason Woodruff, who's remained at Station 19 for five years on Williams' shift. Before JFRD, he volunteered and worked as a firefighter at a smaller department in Central Florida.

"I've had the title [of firefighter] for a long time, but you come here and you feel like you've earned it," Woodruff said. "You're jumping fences, knocking down doors, stopping gas leaks, going to GSWs, and to fires downtown."

Engine 19's C-shift Eng. Laurence Washington agrees because those types of calls and their frequency fit his definition of firefighting and his expectations of the career.

"If I'm not doing my job, then I might as well quit the job," he said. "It's never the same thing. That's what keeps me here."

Washington first experienced Station 19 as a volunteer in the early 2000s, when he was active duty in the Navy. He recalled it being a busy station then. He also had worked numerous other physically demanding jobs, including roofing, tree work and sanitation. Eventually, Washington's exposure to 19 convinced him to pursue his long-term desire to become a firefighter. His 14-plus years at 19 have only been interrupted with a couple of brief assignments elsewhere. Like Williams and Woodruff, the Night Train is his perfect ride.

"I like being busy," Washington said. "I'll rest when I'm done."



# Leadership at Every Level

## Ladder 1 Engineer Thomas Rooney

The influx of new, young firefighters and recently promoted engineers throughout our department is an opportunity to cultivate a new crop of effective leaders. JFRD's engineers are going to have a big hand in shaping our newest members and learning what it's like to lead. In doing so, they are also training their firefighters to become engineers in the near future.

Leadership at every level is common in the military, and it's something I experienced in the United States Marine Corps. From cleaning bathrooms on base to fighting in two wars while serving in the infantry, someone always took the lead.

In the Marines there is a saying: "Sergeants and below run the show!" The same could be said about a good engineer. Sergeants in the Marines and engineers in JFRD have

similar roles. The engineer is a liaison between firefighter and officer, running the company in the absence of the officer, and mentoring the firefighters. And, some of our more seasoned engineers even help guide our newer officers. At the same time, engineers must learn how to be an officer so when the time comes for them to step up and lead, they are ready. That is leadership, and we are asking all of this of our engineers. But how are we preparing for this responsibility?

In the Marines, we are entrusted with the great responsibility of protecting American lives. From day one on this job, we are entrusted with a similar responsibility to protect people, lives, and property. It is up to us to ensure we are ready every day we come to work. I can say with absolute certainty that the first day I walked into my

firehouse, I was the weakest link. Yet, I would be held to the highest of standards by the members of my firehouse. So, whose job was it to ensure that I met those standards? At the end of the day, it was up to me to exceed those standards; however, I had a tremendous amount of help along the way.

As senior members in the fire station, engineers must ensure our newest members are learning the ropes. We must share our knowledge of the job, the rig, the ter-

ritory, the tools and the fraternal nature of the fire service. If we fail to do so, how can we expect them to reach their greatest potential?

In war, when the bullets are flying, you do not have time to teach someone his or her job. Nor do we have that luxury when fire is blowing out windows and people are trapped. Train them early and often.

Lead from the front. This is how wars are won. It is not enough to talk about a particular aspect of our job. Show the new guys how to do something with hands on training. Get out there and work with our new folks. Explain how and why we do things, so they can fully understand and eventually anticipate the next task before someone has to tell them. In the not so distant future, your life could be in their hands.

To truly connect with your rookies, be humble and admit when you do not know something. Discuss your own mistakes. Remind them that we all make mistakes. It is our ability to bounce back and learn from our mistakes that sets us apart.

The U.S. Marine Corps is the greatest fighting force to ever walk the earth! If you do not believe me, just ask a Marine and he or she will tell you. That pride in the Marines' ability on the battlefield is similar to how I feel about every apparatus and station I have been assigned to. We are the best, and we want to be at every fire and big call in the city. That pride in your ride, that confidence in your crew, that's what I am talking about! Teach our new folks about that. Teach them that there is more to this job than a station t-shirt or cool new hat. Tell them the stories of the old timers and about all the big fires and about the history of this job and your station. Show them the pictures of the fires and show them the buildings. Explain to them that those who came before them did it right, and that we all have big shoes to fill.



Ladder 1's Eng. Tom Rooney (left) trains with Firefighter Dwayne Lee on the K-12 saw using a special prop behind Station 1 for cutting rebar. Lee is a Recruit Class 1-18 graduate and also assigned to Ladder 1 on the C-shift.

# Extra Efforts and Thank You Notes

## Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention's **Eng. Andy Crosby** helps manage the smoke detector program. He recently handled a request from a disabled homeowner who is also confined to a wheelchair and very dependent on his neighbors for assistance. Crosby quickly discovered that the man's malfunctioning smoke detectors were hard-wired and more than a decade old. Fire Prevention only has the battery-powered detectors, and Crosby didn't want the man to wait on his neighbors for help in picking up hard-wired detectors, so he offered a solution. The man called a home improvement store and paid for the detectors by phone. Crosby picked them up and installed them that day.

## Station 35

In mid-June, Station 35 responded to a call involving an elderly woman who had fallen on her stairs. Although she refused transport, Engine 35's **Lt. Tim Pickering** and **Eng. Joe Howell, Jr.** knew

their service wasn't quite complete. Howell had noticed the guardrail for the stairs was loose, so Engine 35 visited a local hardware store for some supplies and then returned to the woman's home to stabilize the guardrail to help prevent a future accident. That wowed the woman's granddaughter who contacted JFRD via MyJFRD.com.

"I am incredibly impressed and thankful for the men that went above and beyond the call of duty to help her. My husband is a retired JSO officer and that means a lot to me and my family. Thank you so very much from the bottom of my heart. You guys are the best!!!!!!," wrote Dee Brannon.

## Engine 19, Engine 29 and Engine 31

Duval County Public Schools employee Catherine Baucom specializes in teaching English as a second language to students throughout the summer. She recently contacted JFRD for three stand bys at separate schools to edu-

cate her new students about fire safety. She described how the firefighters ensured that language was no barrier.

"I just wanted to let you know how much the students at all schools really enjoyed the JFRD visits! All crews were fantastic with all the kids, they were very hands-on by letting them touch parts of the truck and sit in the front. English is not their first language, and they don't have a lot of experience with our community's authority and safety figures, so this was truly fantastic! One of the firemen actually put on the full suit, despite the extreme heat, to help students be familiar and not scared of how they look in the case of an emergency. We also had a few students with special needs, and it was amazing to see how great they were with them as well!"

"Once again, thank you for helping to provide this experience for all of our students. Since many are very new to this country, I think seeing our community leaders and helpers in such a positive light really benefits them!"

## JFRD 2018-2019 Budget Proposal

Here's a summary of Mayor Curry's proposed improvements for JFRD. All are dependent upon City Council approval before the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

**Fire Station 65 (construction only).**

**Engine 61, Rescue 61 (18 new positions, expected to be in service by April).**

**15 new Firefighter positions for relief.**

**Retain 27 firefighters hired under SAFER grant with new funding.**

**Rescue 17, 37, and 44 (21 new positions that will go into service January).**

**Three new positions in Fire Prevention to assist with arson investigations.**

**\$500,000 for additional capital items, such as extractors/dryers, and fire/rescue equipment.**

**Replacement vehicles: 5 engines, 3 ladders, 22 rescues, 2 tankers, 2 crash trucks, 1 air truck, 16 light vehicles.**

## Story Ideas & Photos

Please e-mail [jbracey@coj.net](mailto:jbracey@coj.net)

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