

Glen Carbon Fire Department Creates Full-Time Firefighter/Paramedic Positions

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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GLEN CARBON - The Glen Carbon Fire Protection District will begin a new chapter on July 1 with the implementation of full-time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week firefighters in addition to EMS duty crews.

While Paid-On-Call Volunteers have been a more than 100-year tradition and will continue to be a critical component of the District's response team, this addition will allow a two-man crew to get a fire truck on the scene on a 5-10 minute response basis. District residents will experience a more reliable fire response as a result. It is usually not possible for volunteers to respond to this promptly unless they are pre-positioned at a station. The District is comprised of 1- Paid Fire Chief, 1- Paid Deputy Fire Chief, 1- Paid Paramedic Supervisor, 8-Paid Firefighter/Paramedics, 30-Paid-on-Call Firefighters, and 20-Part-Time Paramedics.

A two-person Firefighter/Emergency Medical Service Crew will be positioned 24 hours a day at Station 2, 430 Glen Carbon Road near Illinois Route 159 in addition to another EMS Crew at Station 1 at 199 Main St. near the covered bridge. Station 1 has a higher concentration of volunteers in the immediate area in the event that more on-scene resources are needed. The District also has Mutual Aid agreements with surrounding Departments such as Maryville and Edwardsville for major incidents.

This was made possible by EMS crews who volunteered to train and certify as firefighters giving them a dual role that allows for a more flexible and effective response. The effort was conceived, developed, and implemented by Chief Jason Whitaker with the support of the Board of Trustees, specifically President Luke Harris and Trustee Ron Williams.

These changes stemmed from the results of a study that recommended improvements in governance, organization, leadership, administration, human resources, equipment acquisition, inspections, and training. This has served as a template for implementing improvements going forward that have greatly improved the District's operations and effectiveness.

The Glen Carbon Fire Protection District is actively seeking volunteers to supplement its outstanding team. No previous experience is necessary, and the District funds all training for new recruits. A requirement is that one must live within 4 miles of either of the 2 Stations. Applications can be found on the Glen Carbon Fire Protection District's website: www.glencarbonfire.com , or by stopping by the Station.

Contact Chief Jason Whitaker at (618) 979-8795 or jwhitaker@glencarbonfire.com for more information.