



SAINT JOHN

SAINT JOHN STORY SERIES

Saint John Story Series is a place to profile and highlight City of Saint John staff, service areas, and the positive impacts of City led initiatives within our community.

The future of firefighting: new recruits learn the skills and teamwork required to join the Saint John Fire Department

November 3, 2022

A dozen new recruits have something to celebrate following the successful completion of a seven-week training and team-building program with the Saint John Fire Department (SJFD).

A formal graduation ceremony was held for all 12 new firefighters on October 28.

Division Chief of Training, Special Operations and EMO Peter Ehler says the program is the final step in the recruitment process for the candidates and involves learning about hazardous materials response, technical rope rescue, fire suppression and more.

“As firefighters, we do everything from medical response to high angle rescue, boat rescue and hazardous materials response and so subsequently the recruits have to have a broad knowledge base,” says Ehler. “We’re hiring people for potentially a 30 or 40-year career, so we want to make sure we have the right people who have the technical skill, the aptitude and the physical ability to complete the tasks.”



In recent years, the SJFD has seen several retirements meaning there were positions that needed to be filled, and due to their excellent work during training all 12 graduates have been recommended for hire.



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“We’re very happy with this crew. They supported each other well as a group, they had high functioning communication, they were committed. On top of all that, they just seem like good people,” Ehler adds. “Working together and clear communication are key in this career due to the inherent danger involved in the job.”

Division Chief Ehler also stresses the importance of focusing on team building and trust as part of the training and why it is such a priority. “As firefighters, we must be able to build trust with each other, and rely on each other because, together, we go through some of the worst situations imaginable. Having trust in each other’s technical skill, physical ability and cognitive ability is important to our personal safety, and also to that of the community who relies on us when they need help.”

The graduation ceremony is not just a celebration for the recruits; it is also a day of reflection for those who have spent their careers with the SJFD.

“For generations of firefighters like myself, the graduation ceremony is a nice reflection, perhaps an opportunity to reminisce upon when you were in those seats and starting your career and how big it seemed,” says Ehler. “You know when they’re starting out that they’re going to see many difficult things and they are really going to rely on each other, and that they are going to have a deeply rewarding career – and so you’re just excited for them.”

The City congratulates the new recruits and welcomes them as valuable members of the Saint John Fire Department.





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The Saint John Fire Department has been operating since 1786 and is responsible for servicing 126 square miles of the City. The Department's focus is on reducing loss of life, personal injury, property damage or impact on the environment through six primary services: Fire rescue and suppression, technical rescue, fire prevention and investigation, medical first response and hazardous materials Emergency response.

Pictured:

Top Row (L-R) – Matthew Clifford, Tyler McLaughlin, Jakob Teehan, Adam Ramsay

Middle Row (L-R) – Dylan Chase, Bradley Yowart, Noah Adams, Erik Doucet

Bottom Row (L-R) – Shaun Senyk, Lucas Manders, Daniel Ingleston, Matthew Palmer