



City of Placentia Press Release

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PLACENTIA'S FIRST INAUGURAL FIRE ACADEMY BEGINS

PLACENTIA, CA – The first inaugural Fire Academy began for the new Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department on Monday, May 4, 2020. The Academy began with a small commencement ceremony that introduced the firefighters to the Placentia City Council. Remarks were made by Mayor Ward Smith, Councilmember Rhonda Shader, City Administrator Damien R. Arrula, Fire Chief J. Pono Van Gieson, and Chief Executive Officer of Lynch EMS, Walt Lynch.

The Fire Academy consists of both didactic and practical instruction in the general areas of firefighting, emergency medical services, and hazardous materials. “The firefighters are placed in intense situations and will be expected to perform, learning first-hand, what it means to dig deep,” said Fire Chief J. Pono Van Gieson. “They will spend hundreds of hours on the drill ground, throwing ladders, deploying hose lines, tying knots, and live firefighting. They will be required to meet time standards for donning turnouts and other critical firefighting skills, while writing papers, taking tests, and being evaluated in emergency medical service scenarios.”

The firefighters will typically begin their day at 7:00 a.m. with training instructors during physical fitness. After their physical fitness routine is complete, they will line up for uniform inspections and attend classroom lecture. Most days will be rigorous, with firefighters training in full firefighting gear while performing various firefighting evolutions until the end of the day, which can be ten hours long.

“Training is one of the most important functions of the new Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department, said Mayor Ward Smith. “This Academy is intended to prepare our department to serve our community in the most efficient and effective and transparent means possible, and to ensure personal safety as we deliver the best possible service to our community.”

“Having participated in the first inaugural Fire Academy was truly a momentous occasion as it marked a huge milestone in our efforts to establish our very own Fire Department,” said Councilmember Rhonda Shader. “I am excited to see our firefighters train with the most modern firefighting equipment and techniques, while preparing them to be integral parts of the Placentia community upon graduation from the Academy.”

The firefighters are scheduled to graduate in mid-June, 2020 and take an oath to faithfully serve the public and begin their careers as fulltime Probationary Captains, Engineers, and Firefighters for the new Fire and Life Safety Department starting July 1, 2020.

For more information and continual updates, please visit www.placentia.org/fireems.

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