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CONTACT: Ruthie Retana
(562) 463-3145

Los Angeles Fire Department Hires Record-Breaking Number of Rio Hondo Fire Academy Graduates

WHITTIER – Seven graduates of the Rio Hondo Fire Academy have been hired by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), a historically high number that College leaders say testifies to the strength of Rio Hondo College’s training program.

The graduates, who attended Rio Hondo College as part of different academy classes, were all part of a single LAFD new employee training class of 45 that graduated on Sept. 14.

Hiring by urban fire agencies is a highly involved process that requires a series of applications, written exams, physical ability tests and interviews before candidates even qualify for placement on a hiring list. Hundreds of applicants contend for each spot.

LAFD’s intensive four-month training classes represent the best of the best who survive the process.

“This is exceptional,” said Capt. Scott Jaeggi, a Rio Hondo College fire technology and emergency medical technician instructor. “It is so competitive. We’ve had two or three in the same training class before, but never seven. They were all great students when they were with us and they are a great representation of the quality of firefighter we turn out.”

The seven students, their Rio Hondo Fire Academy class and their new assignments are:

- Jonathon Smith, Class 66, Fire Station 13-B, Korea Town
- Jose Gomez, Class 87, Fire Station C, Korea Town
- Daniel Martinez, Class 80, Fire Station 95-A, LAX/Hotel District
- Patricia Ochoa, Class 86, Fire Station 94-C, South LA
- Kenneth Sjogren, Class 85, Fire Station 35-B, Hollywood
- Greg Marx, Class 39, Fire Station 26-B, West Adams
- Eric Sepulveda, Class 84, Fire Station 75-A, Mission Hills

MORE

Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

“Congratulations to these fine young firefighters, who are embarking on a career in public service at one of our nation’s most accomplished fire departments,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “Their selection serves as a declaration of the quality of training we provide at the Rio Hondo Fire Academy.”

“Rio Hondo College’s Fire Academy has a rich and storied history that is characterized by the quality of our graduates,” Board of Trustees President Norma Edith Garcia said. “Our wildland training has long boasted high placement numbers, but urban firefighting is an especially intense and competitive field. These seven placements show a recognition that our training in that arena is among the best available.”

PHOTOS

RHC_FIRE_1: Seven Rio Hondo Fire Academy graduates were hired in a single training class by L.A. Fire Department, a number that testifies to the quality of Rio Hondo College’s program. Pictured (l-r) are Greg Marx, LAFD Capt. Andy Ruiz, Daniel Martinez, Jose Gomez, Rio Hondo College Fire Academy Instructor Capt. Scott Jaeggi, Eric Sepulveda, Kenneth Sjogren, and Patricia Ochoa (front). Not pictured: Jonathon Smith.

RHC_FIRE_2: Los Angeles Fire Department celebrated the completion of its four-month training class for new hires on Sept. 14, at LAFD Drill Tower 40 in San Pedro. Seven of the 45 hires are graduates of Rio Hondo Fire Academy.

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