



Firehouse Notes

January
2006

Do You Have Anything You'd Like to Share? You Have to Share It for Us to Print It.

Nothing of your personal lives will be shared without your permission and approval. So, if there is a new addition to your family you'd like to introduce to your associates at St. George; or a special family event, graduation or wedding; please pass it on to the PIO in person, by phone or via email. We'll be happy to put your news in our next issue. But, we can't print what you don't share with us.

We Got the SAFER Grant !

As you are all, I'm sure, already aware, St. George has been awarded a \$1.8 million grant under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program. This means that St. George will add another 18 new firefighters to the already proposed 13 positions we have committed to fill in 2006.

We will not only fully staff Station 64 upon completion, but also be able to increase the number of people assigned to our existing companies, and/or put an additional company in service, or some variation of both. So, 2006 is definitely going to be a growth year for the Department.

That presents us, as an organization, with not only opportunities to be taken advantage of, but also challenges to be overcome.

Two Academies Slated for 2006

We anticipate a class of 22 cadets for the first St. George Fire Academy of 2006. The classes begin later this month, with an expected graduation in mid-June. The second academy will begin in July. So, St. George will have two classes of rookies coming to the floor this year.

The number of cadets recruited for the second academy has not, as yet, been determined. It will depend upon both the graduation rate of the first academy and any changes in staffing that may be made by our administration and Board.

Santa Claus Parades Were a Big Hit

Our annual St. George Santa Parades were a big hit with the community again this year. A surprising number of people truly look forward to the yearly procession through their neighborhoods. The Santa Parades have definitely become a tradition.

Your PIO personally fielded no fewer than 10 phone calls one Saturday afternoon, after returning to the office with a reporter to give a background interview and took numerous other calls from our citizens throughout the month. Of those calls there was one complaint that in the world of heightened fears in which we live, the caller thought we should not be frightening people by going through the neighborhood with lights and sirens. The rest were mostly wanting to know when we would go down their street so they wouldn't miss us.

The parades, and our Department, attracted a good deal of positive media coverage. You are all to be commended for the cooperative spirit with which you interacted with the reporters and photographers who followed us, and in some cases rode along. They appreciated it and mostly seemed to genuinely enjoy watching and recording your interaction with the public.

I really enjoyed the parades I participated in. It was fun to see the kids' reactions to Santa on the fire truck. It was also very heart-warming to see the generosity of our citizens at a time when just about everyone had already given to the max. We helped make Christmas better for a lot of people.

In addition to being a fun event, the parades also allowed us to help bring Christmas gifts to over 600 children in the Baton Rouge area through our partnership with the Come and Help organization. On top of that, we collected over 4,400 pounds of food for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. That's up from slightly over 3800 pounds last year.

There were a couple of bumps in the road, but nothing too serious. We can't do anything about the weather, but I'll try to fix stuff like Station 66 scheduled to run during the Jones Creek Christmas Parade. I'll try to work more cooperatively with neighborhood and business associations to fit in better with any organized activities they may have.