



Media Release

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For immediate release

Inaugural volunteer firefighter recruitment training program a success **Applications for second class are being accepted now**

Nelson, BC: The new structured recruitment program for Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) volunteer firefighters has proven to be a major success. The inaugural group, which included 50 recruits, have now completed the volunteer firefighter training program which included regionalized recruitment and a Regional Fire Academy. This new approach to recruitment and training, implemented at the beginning of 2024, has equipped a new cohort of dedicated volunteers with the skills and knowledge necessary to protect our communities. This milestone marks another step in the fire service's ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our residents through the invaluable support of volunteer firefighters.

"Our new volunteer recruits have demonstrated exceptional resilience and teamwork," said Tristan Fehst, Acting RDCK Regional Fire Chief. "They have successfully met the high standards set forth and we are excited to welcome them to our ranks."

"The dedication from the new recruits was impressive," said Dan Zayac, RDCK Regional Training Officer. "I deeply appreciate the time and commitment they put in for preparing to serve our communities."

During the accelerated process, recruits underwent an intensive training regiment designed to prepare them for the diverse challenges they will face in the line of duty. The program included rigorous physical conditioning, classroom instruction, and hands-on experience with firefighting equipment and techniques. Recruits also received specialized training in emergency medical response, hazardous materials handling, and community outreach. Each recruit successfully met the stringent training standards set by the service and the BC Structure Fire Minimum Training Standards, ensuring they are fully prepared to serve their communities effectively.

"The success of the Regional Fire Academy was made possible by the hard work of our Fire Service Trainers which include full-time Regional Training Officer Dan Zayac, Fire Service Trainer's Veronica Kinch and Philippe Beaudet, as well as our As and When Trainers comprised of volunteer firefighters," said Fehst.

Barry Farynuk, who was a volunteer firefighter 20 years ago in Northern BC, was part of the first cohort involved in the RDCK training program.

"I was a little unsure what to expect because my previous experience in Northern BC was very casual and not well organized or resourced," said Farynuk. "Right from the beginning I was pleasantly surprised. The training proceeds at a pace that is deliberate to ensure all recruits learning styles and needs are considered and no

one is left behind. I was always given enough learning resources, skills and practices to be safe for myself, my team and the public going forward as a firefighter.”

The RDCK Fire Service is comprised of 16 volunteer fire departments operating out of 17 fire stations throughout the region. The new volunteer firefighters have joined their community’s fire department to continue their education and development. Their training has emphasized not only technical proficiency but also the importance of community engagement and public education. The ongoing commitment to meeting high training standards ensures RDCK volunteer firefighters are well-prepared to handle any situation that arises, safeguarding our community with professionalism and expertise.

In light of the program's success, the RDCK Fire Service is pleased to announce the launch of its next volunteer firefighter recruitment drive to be followed by Class 2 of the Regional Fire Academy this fall. Applications are being accepted now through August 26, 2024 at 12:00 pm. Aspiring volunteers who are passionate about public service and eager to make a difference in their community are encouraged to apply. The recruitment process will include an open house information session, application, and interview. Selected candidates will have the opportunity to join the next training program, set to commence on September 25, 2024. The training program ensures that all recruits meet the high standards necessary to serve as effective and reliable volunteer firefighters.

"We are looking for individuals who are committed to excellence and have a strong desire to serve," said Fehst. "This is a challenging yet rewarding role, and we invite anyone interested in joining our volunteer team to apply and take the first step towards making a positive impact in our community."

“Regardless of your background or experience, and if you are searching for a meaningful way to serve your community and experience self growth and learning that is a fun, exciting, dynamic experience that focuses on safety, teamwork and service to your community, consider a career as a volunteer firefighter with the RDCK,” said Farynuk. “You won't regret it. I'm glad that I joined and participated in this experience.”

For more information about the recruitment process and to apply, please visit www.rdck.ca/volunteer, email fireadmin@rdck.bc.ca, or contact Leanne at 250-352-1570.

About the RDCK Fire Service

The following [16 fire departments](#) comprise the RDCK Fire Service:

- Balfour-Harrop
- Beasley
- Blewett
- Crescent Valley
- Kaslo
- North Shore
- Ootischenia
- Passmore
- Pass Creek
- Riondel
- Robson
- Slocan
- Tarrys
- Winlaw
- Yahk
- Ymir

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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