

[Chad]: We have to stay focused, concentrate, and look at specializations. So those are the things that I think are the buzzwords of the future for me and for our fire department here.

[MUSIC BED FADES IN]

[SFX 1]

[SFX 2]

FROM W-H-J-E, THIS IS FIRST RESPONDERS 411, GETTING YOU THE INSIDE SCOOP ON FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE CARMEL AREA.

[SFX 3]

I'M TATUM PRATI

[MUSIC BED FADES OUT]

[SFX 4]

[Tatum]: Fire Station 46 has been around since February of 2002. As with any organization, they have things in store for the future. This includes updates and even challenges that they must confront. Fire Captain Chad Hughes talked to me about these things. We first discussed the station's new fire engine.

[MUSIC BED FADES IN]

[C]: Well, we're very excited about our new 2016 Pierce Enforcer Custom Fire Engine. We, at Station 46, received one, and an identical one was delivered to Station 45 at 107th and College. So the City of Carmel Clay Township received two new Pierce Engines here this fall. It was a 20 year old engine that was replaced. It served us very well, really gonna miss that truck. But the new engine has really filled the shoes nicely if you will. It's a very, very nice piece of equipment. We're very fortunate to have such a nice, nice truck.

[MUSIC BED FADES OUT]

[T]: Along with this new addition, there are some challenges that face the station.

[C]: I think one of the biggest challenges that's facing our department currently is the vast amount of retirement that's taken place. And I like to refer to it as experience drain is what the Carmel Fire Department is facing currently. And that's a challenge that we all have to address because what we're seeing is with a turnover in personnel and personalities, is a turnover in changing and culture. The millennials are now starting to fill these vacancies that the retirees have been on for 20, 30 years, are now stepping up. So with that, you're going to have a change in culture, mentality, experiences. And so, it's been said that the fire service is 150 years of tradition unimpeded by progress. So it's one of those things that, for whatever reason, this particular vocation is reluctant to accept change. But it's really kind of impacted our department more so than it ever has before just because of the way the city has grown. And in the '70s, '80s, and early '90s, now it's the first time we're seeing that large of a volume of turnover in retirees. So we've got some challenges. But we've got plans in place. And the city has recognized that, and they're taking the proactive approach to have those replacements in a controlled, systematic approach, so we're not overwhelmed with too many new people, and then have that impact our level of service which it is not. We are controlling that, so that we can systematically and purposely integrate these new people into our system, so that the level of service is as high or higher than what it's ever been.

[T]: Even though there are some challenges facing the fire department, Captain Hughes is excited for the department's future.

[MUSIC BED FADES IN]

[C]: I'm excited about the future. With everything that's going on in the geopolitical world, I'm excited. I'm excited about the future and whatever. Carmel, Indiana and the Carmel Fire

Department has a very bright future, and with that, so do the citizens that we serve and protect. And things are only going to get better. Can you imagine where we're going to be in another five, ten, fifteen, twenty years? It's really neat to see where we're at. The fire service is evolving. I foresee us doing more, being more proficient, being more efficient with the same amount of personnel or even, in some cities, even less. We gotta do more with what we have.

[MUSIC BED FADES OUT]

But I would say that those challenges is, in the future, is probably going to require some specialization. And we're going to have to be aware to properly and proficiently utilize resources. And that's the challenges I think that we are facing here at the Carmel Fire Department and challenges personally that I'm facing is that that constant reevaluation of resource management is something.

[MUSIC BED FADES IN]

But at the same time, with challenges breeds opportunity. So there you go. There we go. So when we have a problem, creating that solution creates opportunity. So we have to stay focused, concentrate, and look at specializations. So those are the things that I think are the buzzwords of the future for me and for our fire department here.

[T]: Along with the excitement about their new engine, Captain Hughes has a positive outlook on how they will confront the challenges. For WHJE, this has been Tatum Prati. More stories like this can be found at whje.com.

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