

Fire department offers challenge, camaraderie

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many hours of learning and working — often during inconvenient hours of the day and night — you might want to take notice of a recruiting meeting scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 21, at fire headquarters, 28711 Drake Road, between 12 and 13 Mile roads.

The fire department is looking for about a dozen good people to serve as part-time firefighters. Interested men and women may pick up applications during the recruit night in-

formational meeting. Those who cannot attend, however, may still apply by contacting Rebojy at fire headquarters, 553-0740.

POTENTIAL RECRUITS will undergo oral interviews — "It's pretty much to see the person" — an agility test, background checks and physical examinations. Training begins Jan. 6.

"We try to get them as close to the stations as possible," Rebojy said. That means matching up your residence to the closest of the city's five fire stations.

Anyone interested in becoming a recruit should keep in mind that recruits are required to respond to at least 35 percent of the runs. All recruits are on a one-year probation and during that time, they must respond to 50 percent of the assigned station's runs, Rebojy said.

That's why it's important for you to consider where you work during the day. If you work far away from the community and cannot respond during the day, you'll have to reach your required percentages at night and the weekends.

"It's wiser to live in the community," Rebojy said, although some from other communities do apply. "If you live in the area, and you don't have problems getting out of bed, you'll make the 35 percent."

Part-time firefighters, who earn an average \$4,500 annually, also are

required to attend training sessions, fulfill station and vehicle maintenance duties and other activities that include National Fire Prevention Week and the Farmington Founders Festival.

"It takes a real commitment in time and effort. No one who comes in should take it lightly," said deputy fire chief Peter Baldwin.

THERE'S NO doubt the hours can be irregular. Rebojy suggests that potential recruits discuss their decisions to apply with their spouses and family members. Anyone interested in attending the informational meeting is encouraged to bring his or her spouse.

"We know we're demanding. We're trying to address that and still provide service to the community," Rebojy said.

A family orientation program also

is expected to be scheduled that will help orient spouses to the demands of the job. The program will be conducted for the families of recruits beginning with the January 1992 class.

To be eligible for consideration as a part-time paid firefighter, an applicant must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent. Applicants must have a valid Michigan driver's license with a satisfactory driving record, live or work in the community and be in acceptable physical condition. They must also have a satisfactory employment record and personal history.

Accepted recruits will spend the first 12 months of their tenure on probation. The first few months of their first year is the most demanding and intensive. Recruits must at-

tend training Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays. Reading and studying also will be done on their own time.

With training beginning Jan. 6, Rebojy says recruits will be allowed to respond to runs by the middle of February. Before that, recruits cannot be exposed to hazards. By the time recruits are allowed to respond they will have completed about 90 hours of training.

When recruits have completed the required 192 hours of firefighting training, they will be state certified. Of the 192 hours, about 130 hours are training for the firefighter I designation and the remaining 60 or so hours is devoted to emergency first responder training. Training continues throughout the probationary 12 months.

"There's a sense of family here, a sense of the group," Rebojy said.



Peter Baldwin

Extinguishing this September 1990 fire on Colgate illustrates some of the skills fire department recruits will learn during their 12-month probation. Topics include the safe wearing of protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus as well as the handling of hoses and ladders.

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