



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **(Five Community Volunteers Earn Firefighter Badges)**

Five community volunteers stepped up to receive their firefighter badges Tuesday evening completing their six month-long training academy. The event was the graduation ceremony for the latest group of volunteer firefighters from Hillsboro Fire and Rescue and occurred at the department's Training Center on Griffin Oaks Street.

"These citizens commit a huge amount of their personal time and energy to complete the rigorous training and we are very proud to welcome them," said Training Chief Sam Phillips, in his opening remarks. "There is also a family sacrifice that must be acknowledged here, as well," Phillips added, "The volunteers have completed this training during their evenings and weekends after spending a full day at their regular jobs or attending college." Phillips went on to administer the oath of office to the newly minted firefighters.

The volunteer academy teaches the recruits basic firefighting techniques, emergency medical procedures, automobile extrication and a host of other skills. Volunteer Battalion Chief Steve Huntington pinned on the badges for the new firefighters. They include:

**Cameron Alex** -- a 2007 Century High School graduate who is currently a student in the Fire Protection Program at Portland Community College;

**Thomas Whittington** -- employed as a road engineer for the Oregon Department of Forestry in Forest Grove and provides valuable experience as a veteran wildland firefighter;

**Damien Rhodes** -- a California native who moved to Oregon after graduate school to work for Intel and chose firefighting as his venue for giving back to his community;

**Philip Reid** -- whose interest in firefighting started after a ride-along at a Baltimore-area volunteer fire company and propelled him to take disaster management training and achieve his Rescue Diver certification;

**Mark Runde** -- who sought a career change after obtaining his undergraduate degree in business and found joining the fire service to be a personal awakening. He's obtained his Emergency Medical Technician-Basic certification and has decided to continue his medical training to obtain his Paramedic degree.

The addition of these five brings Hillsboro Fire Department's volunteer ranks to 22 active volunteers. They compliment a force of 78 career firefighters who provide 24/7 fire protection and

emergency medical services to more than 90-thousand citizens in the City of Hillsboro. Volunteer applications are accepted at any time. A volunteer recruit academy is held only once a year. Applicants must be 18-years of age and a high school graduate or hold a GED certificate. For more information on Hillsboro Fire and Rescue, visit: [www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire](http://www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire) or call 503-681-6166.

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Photo Caption:

Admin Oath 6820.jpg – Hillsboro Fire Training Chief Sam Phillips (l) administers the oath of office to five newly graduated volunteer firefighters. The firefighters are (l to r) Cameron Alex, Philip Reid, Damien Rhodes, Mark Runde and Thomas Whittington.

Volunteer FFs 6831.jpg – The five new Hillsboro Volunteer Firefighters (l-r) Cameron Alex, Philip Reid, Damien Rhodes, Mark Runde and Thomas Whittington.