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"Reserve fire fighters integral part of Norfolk Fire Division"



Norfolk Fire Chief Scott Cordes swore in five new recruits into the ranks of the City of Norfolk Fire Reserve Division on Thursday evening and gave them their badges - proof they are part of the Norfolk Fire Division.

"Even though they are not fulltime firefighters, our reserves are vital members of the division, providing valuable aid at a fire," said Tim Wragge, Norfolk Assistant Fire Chief.

The new reserves are Mitchell Kallhoff, Andrew Willer, Joe Greenough, Dana Conyers and Chris Tillotson.

Though part-time, reserve firefighters need to train for and pass various tests of strength, speed and aptitude before they can be a part of the Fire Division. Some of the physical tests they have to pass include having to drag a 174 pound dummy, carry weights through an obstacle course, drag a water filled fire hose and use a sledge hammer to move a weight on a drag sled.

Once accepted into the program, reserves are required to attend training twice a month to learn how to drive a fire truck, operate fire hoses and do anything else required of a fulltime firefighter. They carry pagers that alert them when there's a fire in the

Norfolk area with their employers knowing they may have to leave work to help fight a fire. Some of the reserves have, in the past, been hired as full-time firefighters.

"Being a reserve gives you an idea of what it's like to be a full-time firefighter and if that is something you'd like to have as a career or not. We encourage people who are interested in firefighting to go through the training exercises and go through the testing to become a reserve," Wragge said.

The new reserve firefighters were welcomed to the Fire Division with a meal for them and their families at the Fire Division Tuesday evening. With the addition of the new recruits, there are now 25 reserve firefighters in addition to the 31 full-time firefighters.

(Photo from left: Chris Tillotson, Dana Conyers, Mitchell Kallhoff, Andrew Willer, and Joe Greenough.)