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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Fire Department's recruits undergo training

**November 16, 2017** – Flagler County firefighter-paramedics undergo rigorous training to complete their probationary period with a “Pinning Ceremony” officially welcoming them to the Fire Rescue Department.

“It is a pleasure to welcome our newest firefighters through this time-honored and proud tradition,” said Fire Rescue Chief Don Petito. “During their one-year probation they had to prove to instructors, field-training officers, and supervisors that they have what it takes to become part of the Flagler County team.”



**Charles Ericksen, Jr.**  
District 1

**Greg Hansen**  
District 2

**David Sullivan**  
District 3

**Nate McLaughlin**  
District 4

**Donald O'Brien Jr.**  
District 5

Cory Bauman, Brian Meehan, Alex Patton and Michael Wirth were pinned Tuesday (November 14) by Flagler’s top brass: Chief Petito, Deputy Chief Joe King, Training Chief Lenny Ensalaco, and battalion chiefs James Shaw, Richard Bennett and James Burnsed. Fadi Fattouh also graduated from probation but was unable to attend the ceremony.

Three firefighter paramedics – Samantha McDonnell, Kevin Feldman and Reuben Zuazua – were hired October 30, and started their probation with in-service classes with FireFlight, the flashover simulator and other live fire exercises at the fire tower on Justice Lane.

“We simulate situations that are beyond the scope of what these recruits experience at the Fire Academy,” Ensalaco said.

The flashover simulator – which has two side doors to recreate a building interior – allows the training staff to control the flow and path of the fire for the recruits.

“Temperatures in the box can reach 1,000 degrees,” Ensalaco said. “It’s something the first time you experience it.”

He noted that the tip of a flame is 1,300 degrees. A static-electricity shock generates a 2,000-degree spark for the fraction of a second its effects are felt.

“It is very exciting to get a little taste of the things we will experience,” McDonnell said. “None of this makes me re-think my decision.”



Feldman prefers to stay closer to the ground.

“After going up in the helicopter, I know I don’t want to be a flight medic,” he said. “The motion bothers me more than the fire.”

Zuazua appreciates the relationship-building opportunities the training provides.

“It provides a good look at the day-to-day but also provides experiences we won’t often see in the future,” he said. “I like the camaraderie that comes from going through this together and learning from each other.”

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