



CITY OF KENNER

News Release

E. "BEN" ZAHN III
MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 7, 2018

MAYOR BEN ZAHN ACCEPTS FEMA SAFER AWARD TO HIRE 24 FIREFIGHTERS

Kenner, LA. – The city of Kenner has been awarded a nearly \$2 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to hire 24 additional firefighters and to pay for training and other costs over the next three years, Kenner Mayor Ben Zahn announced.

The grant is a huge boost for the Kenner Fire Department, with a \$10.4 million budget and six firehouses, which has been chronically understaffed for a decade, Mayor Zahn said.

"The men and women of the department have done an amazing job considering the staffing situation they face each and every day," Mayor Zahn said. "This is a significant step in the right direction, and we are also considering other ways to improve public safety in order to provide Kenner residents with the quality department they deserve."

Mayor Zahn said the success of this application was due to teamwork within current city government. "Our Fire Inspector, Keith Crimen, Jr., worked in tandem with Emergency Management Assistant Director Heather Hilliard to compile the facts needed to present a compelling request. Their dedication to the needs of the city are shown in this SAFER grant – the first Kenner has ever accepted and one that will be immediately used to improve our city.

"We will be announcing the new firefighter class in the very near future, and look forward to welcoming our newest first responder employees," the mayor said. "One of the benefits of increasing personnel is the ability to send more of our current department staff to receive additional educational opportunities."

This year, the fire department has received 1,564 calls for service, which includes 118 fires, 544 medical calls, 92 vehicle accidents and additional safety actions, such as rescuing 21 children locked in cars and this week's rescue of a near-drowning victim in Lake Pontchartrain.

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With the addition of these 24 firefighters, who will be assigned to each of the department's three platoons, every fire apparatus in the city will have more staff to respond to the needs of Kenner residents and businesses.

Fire Chief Ryan Bergeron said adding the additional firefighters will ensure that a new ladder truck headed to the city later this year will be properly staffed. With the help of BP settlement funds, the apparatus is the first new truck purchased since before Hurricane Katrina.

After years of neglect, Mayor Zahn said the Fire Department is now headed in the right direction.

"I'm pleased that AS ONE Kenner team, our employees continue to help each other to reach important goals that benefit the community," Mayor Zahn said. "We are truly united in purpose, committed to teamwork and working every day to make KENNER PROUD."

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