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Broome plea for new firefighters stirs little interest Open houses offer new approach

By [Eric Reinagel](#)
Press & Sun-Bulletin

Countywide open houses at volunteer fire departments netted four potential new members for the Port Dickinson Fire Company, but the recruitment campaign was less successful elsewhere.

Choconut Center Fire Company Assistant Chief Don Kausman said no one stopped by his department's open house between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Saturday.

"It's just tough to get people to come out," Kausman said.

Choconut Center and Port Dickinson were just two of the 33 departments in Broome County that held open houses Saturday to try to attract new recruits.

Robert Shaller, a 45-year member of the Port Dickinson Fire Company, said four people, who were 40 years old or older, filled out applications expressing interest in joining the department during his station's open house.

"In a small village like Port Dickinson, we were pleased with the turnout," he said. The department has about 15 active members, about three times less than when he started volunteering 45 years ago, Shaller said.

Shaller said it was the first time the Broome County Firefighters Association and the Broome County Fire Chiefs Association combined efforts to have countywide open houses. The open house idea was first conceived by the Union Center Fire Company and later expanded by the 20-month-old Recruitment and Retention Committee of the Firefighters Association.

Shaller said the event was necessary because of a shortage of volunteers. Fire officials say there are about 1,300 volunteers signed up across Broome County, but no one knows how many of them are active.

Kausman said the Choconut Center Fire Company has 15 active members.

"We could use every hand we can get," he said.

Anybody interested in joining the Choconut Center Fire Company can stop by during Monday night's training sessions, scheduled from 7 to 9:30 at the station, 1011 Airport Road, Choconut Center.

-- Staff Writer Jim Wright contributed to this report.



Endwell Volunteer Fire Department Chief John Ruck, right, shows Tom Harris of Endwell some of the department's fire trucks Saturday afternoon. Area fire stations held open houses Saturday to draw new recruits.

JOSEPH GERONIMO / Press & Sun-Bulletin

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um... most of us have to work fulltime, There is no

such thing as an 8 hr a day job anymore ,so when the paid firefighters are doing nothing they can rest or sleep, most of us are working too make ends meet in expensive nys.

Example: I work 10-12 hrs a day plus more I just got done working 12 hrs am I ready and fit to go fight a fire? I dont think so, what I am is an accident waiting to happen! Think about it? I would be worried about making a valuable mistake that could cost the life of someone or my self.

Nys needs too make it right and pay firefighters what they deserve they are heros and need too be paid! No one has time too volunteer any more because all we do is work to get bye in nys! Just my two cents worth!

Posted by: **newsgeek** on Sun Jan 20, 2008 6:06 pm

But they are going to FLOCK to JC right????????? isn't that what the pro dissolve people are proposing?? A volunteer fire dept. Good one sullivan. 😊

Posted by: **the hills** on Sun Jan 20, 2008 1:11 pm

It is too much of a way of life than just helping out in an emergency. All the training and meetings and politics. The time committment is too much. I think everyone is going to have to deal with the reality that the "all volunteer" fire department is coming to and end. On that note check out the salaries of the firemen in the cities and villages that pay them. It is going to cost. Really time to look at consolidation.

Posted by: **frostedmullet** on Sun Jan 20, 2008 10:09 am

Okay people. Like it or not volunteers are needed. Keep thinking it is someone elses responsibility. Just remember when the day comes you might need fire or medical response, don't whine about the lack of response or help that arrives. As it is quite often several stations are called out for one fire when more bodies and some more equipment might make that less neccesary. And keep in mind when your station is assisting another, that you are probably being covered by another station even

farther away. If you do decide to join keep in mind that this is not a social gathering. All kidding aside, when there are no fires, the trucks and equipment have to be maintained and checked regularly. In other words, be part of the solution not the problem.

Posted by: **courtin** on Sun Jan 20, 2008 6:24 am

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