Recruitment And Retention Tips

How can volunteer fire departments attract new members and keep current members on board? The U.S. Fire Administration in 1998 released a publication called “Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service” to help volunteer fire departments build successful recruitment and retention programs. Among the USFA’s suggestions were these tips:

- Develop and implement a needs assessment based on your organization’s current volunteer staffing, existing vacancies and anticipated staffing needs.
- Identify the skills, knowledge and abilities needed and any required certifications.
- Prepare job descriptions based on tasks and responsibilities.
- Develop a plan and timetable for recruitments.
- Use a dedicated recruiter or volunteer coordinator who would be responsible for the department’s recruitment program.
- When interacting with prospective volunteers, be realistic about the demands of volunteering.
- Emphasize the camaraderie of the fire service and the opportunity to make new, lasting friendships.