

Jake Jones Voted New Fire Chief for Hector's Volunteer Fire Department

James Garrison affectionately referred to by many of Hector's residents as, "Pappa Smurf" retired from his position as Fire Chief on Tuesday, January 10th, 2017. Garrison has been in the fire service for over forty years and has been with [Hector's Fire Department](#) since the 1970's. Even though Garrison has retired from Chief, he is still a valued member of the department working as an apparatus driver.



Jake Jones and James Garrison at Fire Station in Hector. Photo by Lacey Keenan ©2017.

Jake Jones was voted Hector's new Fire Chief. Jones is also Team Leader for the Hector area First Responders. Jones has been in the fire service here since 1993. He began in the fire service in 1986 when he was 17 years old, at Dardanelle Rural Fire Department. He was also on the Fire Department in the

military at Fort Bragg.

“The way we are set up is a Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, two Captains, and two Lieutenants because we have two stations. We have the Hector station and another in Scottsville,” said Jones.

There were several promotions within the department. Captain Tony Garrison was promoted to Assistant Chief. One of the Lieutenants is now Captain, and some of the firefighters were moved into Lieutenant positions.

19 certified firefighters are members of the Hector Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD), and of these 17 are [Emergency Medical Response](#) (EMR) qualified. 6 are also, members of Hector’s Emergency Response Team.

Training

All Volunteer Firefighters must complete twenty-four hours of Fire Academy training per year. There is always one business meeting and one training session every month. Also, volunteer firefighters are charged with maintenance on the fire trucks.

The department has [Firewise](#) program with [Arkansas Forestry Commission](#) where firefighters go out and help people clean up areas that are overgrown. There are six designated Firewise communities in the district, and that means the department participates in six projects every year, one for each community.

In 2014, the United States had [approximately 1,134,400 firefighters](#). Of these, 69% were volunteers, and only 31% were career firefighters.

Sherry Turney called on the Hector Volunteer Fire Department for help in 2014, when her wood-burning stove caught fire. She showed her appreciation for the firefighters who responded in a Facebook post.

Had the scare of my life yesterday my wood burning stove caught fire. I was panicking thank goodness my mother in law...

Posted by [Sherry Turney](#) on [Thursday, November 27, 2014](#)

December 2012, HVFD was the first to arrive at the [Hector Elementary School fire.](#) Eleven departments worked in conjunction to put out the blaze. Two departments in Conway County were also called out. Some were notified as a part of the automatic aid program Pope County has in place, and others responded under the mutual aid alerts.

Mutual Aid- When firefighters arrive on scene or can assess the need for extra help, they can call in other fire departments in the county to the scene.

Automatic Aid – When certain fire departments are toned at the exact same time the 911 call comes into the local station and respond immediately.

Hector presently has an automatic aid agreement with Moreland.

Community Involvement

Every other year, Hector's fire department takes part in accident reenactments at Hector High School. The program is designed to raise awareness about drunk, or distracted driving among students before prom.



Accident Reenactment at Hector High School 2016. Photo by Lacey Keenan.

The department also, helps out with football games at the school and coordinates with the [Zombie Run](#) each year.

Yearly Fundraiser

Hector's Haunted Hay Ride is the primary fundraiser for the Volunteer Fire Department each year. The members put a lot of effort into the event to make sure it is a fun-filled experience for families.



Ethan Wood and Rodger Standridge dressed as the Sith from Star Wars at Hector's Annual Haunted Hay-ride fundraiser for the Volunteer Fire Department. Photo by Lacey Keenan ©2016.

The City of Hector was able to build a [helipad](#) in 2015 as a joint effort between the [U.S. National Forest Service](#), Pope County, and the HVFD. The forest service uses it to bring in their helicopters when they conduct controlled burns in the National Forest. The medical helicopter has landed 5 times at the department so far. The helipad offers a safer place for the air ambulance to land.

Every member of the department is a volunteer. Fire dues are collected between April and August each year. There were 800

households in the district at last count. Anyone interested in giving directly to the Hector Fire Department can contact Kim Jones at [The Store](#).



Jake Jones, Rodger Standridge, Ken Wood, Terry McLain, Blake Standridge, Kim Jones, Alvin Wood, Sam Hilderbrand, Jessica Jones, James, Garrison, James Housley in front of Firetruck at Hector's Volunteer Fire Department. Photo by Lacey Keenan ©2017.

Without the brave volunteers of Hector's Fire Department, those in need of help would have to wait for emergency services to arrive from Russellville.

"We are here to serve the community, all they have to do is call, and we'll be there," said Jones. "We take time out of our personal lives for the people in the community, because that's what we love to do."