

History of the Eustis Fire Department

The origins of the City of Eustis Fire Department date back to 1883 when it was a fire bucket brigade with an all-volunteer department. During this time, the only way firefighters were alerted about a fire were from citizens shouting fire.

A hand-drawn wagon was the first fire truck used by the fire department.



Interesting Facts

1883

- The Eustis Fire Department was established

1887

- Mr. L.N. Herrick donated the first fire alarm bell to the Eustis Fire Department
- Night Watchmen were hired and paid \$20 a month to look out for fires and ring the bell

1899

- The Eustis Fire Department had one of its first big fires and the Lake Region Newspaper burned to the ground. The newspaper was first published on October 23, 1884 as a weekly publication. After it was acquired by Ansil Daniel Miller, the newspaper joined the Associated News Service and became a daily (Wikipedia contributors, 2020)

1900

- A stationary gas Engine Pumper was purchased
- The annual Fire Department budget was \$9,238

1922

- A 500-gallon motorized Pumper Truck was purchased
- The first paid Fire Chief was hired, Edward S. Reeves
- The famous 150-room Ocklawaha Hotel (a premier winter resort) burned down



Click on the link below for more information on the Ocklawaha Hotel Fire

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1991-03-03-9103020821-story.html>

- This was the year things changed within the Fire Service

1950

The Fire Department only had 50 calls a year

2020-2021

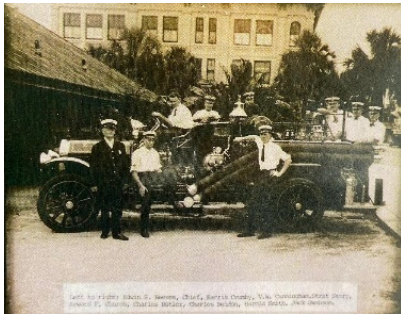
- The annual Fire Department budget was \$3,100,000

Unpaid Eustis Fire Chiefs

Unknown	1883-1886	3-years
S.J. McCulloch	1886-1887	1-year
George E. Minor	1887-1888	1-year
Arthur M. Dewitt	1888-1894	6-years
H.W. Bishop	1894-1897	3-years
Arthur G. Smith	1897-1899	2-years
A.G. Smith	1899-1915	16-years
W.B. Merek	1915-1922	7-years

Paid Eustis Fire Chiefs

Edward S. Reeves	1922-1923	1-year
R. P. McKenna	1923-1924	1-year
C.L. Beldon	1924-1928	4-years
Tom Newham	1928-1928	0-year
Joe Duke	1928-1940	12-years
Raymond Hancock	1940-1946	6-years
C.C. Osborn	1946-1963	17-years
Richard A. Shirk	1963-1986	23-years
Craig E. Haun	1986-1992	6-years
Theodore M. Henderson	1992-2002	10-years
James J. Wright	2002-2004	2-years
Roy L. Tremain	2004-2009	5-years
Rex D. E. Winn	2009-2015	6-years
Michael D. Swanson	2015 – Present	6-years (still active as of 2021)



Early Fire Apparatus

Today the Eustis Fire Department has two fire stations, Station 22 and Station 23. Station 22 is the main station and is located at 100 West Norton Avenue. Station 23 is located at 1800 Hicks Ditch Road.



Station 22



Station 23

Under the direction of Fire Chief Michael Swanson, the department provides administrative, inspection, rescue, vehicle extrication and suppression services to our community. Its 21 uniformed members protect a 12.57 square mile area, with a population of more than 19,000. The Eustis Fire Department typically responds to over 4,000 calls per year and also provides mutual aid to neighboring cities and county area.



The Fire Department has a fleet of equipment including:

- 2008 Ford F-550 Brush Truck
- 2008 Ford F-250 - Command Vehicle
- 2014 Pierce Pumper E-22 (750 gallons water; 1,500 gpm pump)
- 2014 Chevy Tahoe (Chief 22) - Command Vehicle
- 2016 Pierce PUC Pumper E-23 (750 gallons water; 1,500 hydraulic pump)
- 2017 Chevy Suburban (Chief 22) - Command Vehicle
- 2018 Ford Interceptor SUV - Inspector Vehicle
- 2019 Pierce Ladder Truck (L22) - (85 foot ladder, 500 gallons of water, 2,000 gpm pump)
- 2019 Rescue Truck R (22) - Quick Response Vehicle
- 2020 Ford Escape Inspector Vehicle
- 2021 Ford Expedition (Chief 22) - Command Vehicle
- 2 Trek Mountain Bicycles (for EMT service during downtown festivals/events)
- 2024 F250 (Chief 23) - Command Vehicle
- 2025 Pierce Tower Truck (T22) - (100 foot platform, 300 gallons of water, 2,000 gpm pump)

Sources:

City of Eustis – Fire Department. (n.d.) Retrieved May 12, 2021 from <https://www.eustis.org/government/fire/index.php>

Mikell, A. (1991, March 3). Memory of a Grand Hotel Eustis Residents Recall Vacation Spot's Fiery Demise. *Orlando Sentinel*. <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1991-03-03-9103020821-story.html>

Wikipedia contributors. (2020, May 31). The Eustis Lake Region. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:36, May 20, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Eustis_Lake_Region&oldid=959862857