

**From:** Zenkner, Lance  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 22, 2009 1:31 AM  
**To:** APD Commanders  
**Subject:** Fire Academy Students

I don't know if you are aware that the Austin Fire Department conducts a fire and medical academy at LBJ High School [LBJ Fire Academy]. The students go through an application process to get into the program. It is a two year commitment, their junior and senior semesters. If they complete this program they will earn a Texas Commission on Fire Protection Certification and a Department of State Health Services EMT certification. They also receive college credit for these courses. It is very academically and physically challenging.

The senior class is currently winding up their EMT class and hopes to take the national exam next month. Part of the EMT program involves sending the students out on EMS ambulances for rideouts. They will complete 36 hours on EMS ambulances.

The students have been returning from their rounds of weekend rideouts with all war stories of the new things they saw and did. One theme that has come up on several occasions is seeing APD officers on scene. They have all been very impressed with the officers they have encountered. Most have never interacted with a police officer during his/her course of duty. Several admitted to having a negative perception of the police, mainly due to peer influence or biased media coverage. They have come to realize the truth about being a police officer. They commented on the composure and patience of several officers when faced with belligerent or combative individuals. Many were actually upset and wanted to know how *they* ever had a negative opinion of APD.

Seeing your officers in the line of duty has certainly opened these kids eyes to the reality of police work and how difficult it can be - and the professional manner in which it is done. This is only a dozen kids but you guys have definitely affected them. I ask them to pass these positive experiences along to their friends and family. The more the record is set straight, the more it benefits the community.

I know in my 14 years with AFD, I have encountered hundreds of officers and have nothing but respect and appreciation for their service.

Thank You and keep up the invaluable work!

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