



Marion County Board of County Commissioners Marion County Fire Rescue

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FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION HELPS BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (March 5, 2009) – Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR), community leaders and more than a hundred citizens celebrated the grand opening of Liberty Station 32 today. While the two-bay 8,800 square foot fire station will improve emergency response in southwest Marion County, the construction of the station also boosted the local economy.

The construction of MCFR Liberty Station 32 provided jobs for 154 local workers, including painters, electricians and plumbers among others, according to Mike Ethridge, President of Ethridge Construction of Marion County, Inc., who built the station. The Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce and Ocala/Marion County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) commended Ethridge’s “buy local” approach.

“We have to start locally to keep our community surviving,” said Ann Spang, Vice-President of Corporate Relations for the EDC. “Stimulating the economy doesn’t start with money from the federal and state government; it starts here. Look to local businesses for purchases. If you buy something from a local business, those business owners and employees will have money to purchase something from someone else.”

As part of his remarks, Ethridge also commended Marion County Commissioners for getting the best deal for taxpayers. He noted that Liberty Station 32 cost \$159 per square foot to build whereas other fire departments in other communities spent between \$236 and \$327 per square foot for similar fire station construction projects.

“We are doing our part to use tax money prudently,” said Commissioner Charlie Stone, District 5. “We are helping to stimulate the local economy and provide employment for local contractors. These local vendors often give back to our community.”

Several other construction projects are still underway, including the following:

Construction Project	Status of Project	Number of Local Workers Employed
MCFR Friendship Station 21	Under Construction	166
MCFR Ray Lloyd, Jr. Station 31	Under Construction	167
Marion County Forest Library	Under Construction	183

MCFR Friendship Station 21 is a relocated station currently housed in a mobile home that will move from its current address on State Road 200 to Southwest 90th Street. The station will provide primary response to the Friendship area and State Road 200 corridor as well as back-up service to Marion Oaks, Golden Ocala, Shady and the city of Ocala. Ray Lloyd, Jr. Station 31, located at 11240 SW Highway 484 will improve emergency response to Florida Highlands and the State Road 200 and Highway 484 corridors.

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