



# Ocala Fire Rescue

131 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

- 1883 **Thanksgiving Day.** A devastating fire occurs in the downtown business district. *The Ocala House, Palace Hotel, Ocala Banner* and ten stores are destroyed.
- 1883 December. An ordinance is passed to sell Fire Bonds, to be used to purchase apparatus and equipment for firefighting.
- 1884 **Ocala is rebuilt, and quickly becomes known as the “Brick City”.** Brick, stone and iron building materials replace the former wooden structures.
- 1885 An ordinance is created to establish the **Fire Department of the city of Ocala.** Existing volunteer firefighters are incorporated into the new department. William Fox is elected by City Council to be the first Fire Chief of Ocala.
- 1886 **The first annual Firemen’s Ball is held in the month of May.**
- 1889 A fire bell is installed on the grounds near the corner of Osceola Avenue and Ft. King Street. The bell would later be moved to the tower of the new fire station in 1894.
- 1894 **A fire station made of brick is constructed on Southeast Osceola Avenue between Broadway and Ft. King Street, at a cost of \$5,000.00**  
A medal was given by the fire department to a local writer named Beatrice Marean, in appreciation for her efforts to raise funds to buy a strand of horses and a fire engine. The medal was handmade at Tiffany’s in New York and survives to this day. **Ocala’s first fire horses are obtained to replace hand pulled apparatus.**  
Ocala’s *Marion Hose Company No.1* wins the State Championship at the 6th annual convention, which is held in Ocala. A silver presentation cup is awarded to the fastest hose team of the Ocala Fire Department, and survives to this day.
- 1898 **The department consists of two hose wagons, one hook and ladder truck, one chief’s buggy and three horses.**
- 1901 The salary of a fireman is \$35.00 per month.
- 1903 **A double team of horses rather than a single horse is used to pull apparatus for the first time.**
- 1915 A fire chief’s vehicle is purchased, becoming the department’s first motorized apparatus.
- 1916 **All the apparatus becomes motorized, and the fire horses are retired. The former horse stalls in the rear of the station are renovated into a reading room for the men and an office for the chief.**
- 1929 The work schedule for a fireman is 149 continuous hours, with just 19 hours off per week.
- 1935 **Firemen are given one full day off per week. The work week is reduced to 144 hours.**
- 1941 An addition to the fire station is completed, changing the front of the station from Osceola to face Broadway Street. The cost of construction is \$19,359.00
- 1941 **The firemen are placed on a two platoon system, working one day on and one day off, thus reducing the hours worked to 84 hours per week.**
- 1943 Firemen’s uniforms are temporarily changed from blue to khaki color due to war shortages. The first two way radio is installed enhancing communications.
- 1945 **Gymnasium equipment is purchased for the firemen, including tumbling mats, boxing gloves and a medicine ball.**
- 1955 The city purchases a Seagrave 85’ ladder truck for \$33,501.75
- 1963 **The beginning salary for a fireman is \$330.00 per month.**
- 1966 Ocala’s second fire station is built on East Silver Springs Boulevard at 25th Avenue.
- 1967 **The new Fire Station #1 opens on Northeast 3rd Street.**
- 1968 The historic 1894 firehouse was razed, and the site is currently a vacant lot.
- 1972 **The firefighters vote to be represented by the International Association of Firefighters, and Local 2135 is established.**
- 1974 Fire Station #3 opens on Southwest 16th Avenue. At the time this was a dirt road and was the city limits.
- 1977 **The first graduating class of paramedics begin serving the citizens of Ocala.**
- 1980 The Fire Administration building is built on Northeast 3rd Street.
- 1985 **Ocala’s first female firefighter is hired.**
- 1989 “911” becomes operational, replacing the seven digit phone number to call in case of emergency.
- 1990 **Fire Station #4 is built on Southwest 20th Street.**
- 1992 Fire Station #5 opens on Northeast 25th Avenue.
- 1994 **The Ocala Fire Department is officially renamed “Ocala Fire Rescue”.**
- 2003 Fire Station #2 is relocated to Southeast 36th Avenue. The original Station 2 on East Silver Springs Boulevard was razed, and is now the site of the Veteran’s Park.
- 2008 **Fire Station #6 is built on Southwest 50th Court. The two story station has a sliding pole, the first since 1894.**
- 2010 Ocala Fire Rescue celebrates 125 years of service to the citizens of our community.



1894 Fire Station



1894 Fireman’s Heart Medal



1894 Silver Presentation Cup



1915 First Motorized Apparatus



1941 Addition to Fire Station



1955 Seagrave Ladder Truck

**Today, just as in past years, the men and women of Ocala Fire Rescue are committed to saving lives and protecting property.**