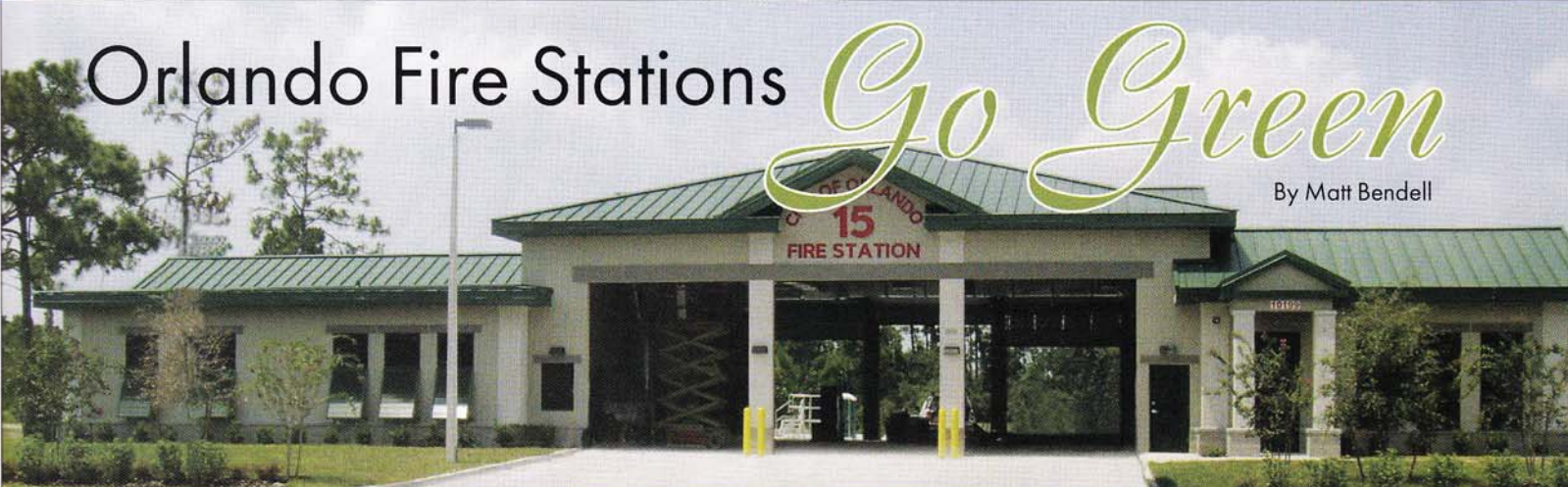


# Orlando Fire Stations *Go Green*

By Matt Bendell



As part of the City of Orlando's "going green" initiative, newly constructed East Orlando fire stations are being built with environmental responsibility in mind.

With all the enthusiasm surrounding the ever popular subject of "going green," some may find it difficult to decipher whether this cleaner way of living is just a fad, or whether these positive lifestyle changes are here to stay. Whether it's using cloth bags at the grocery store, riding our bikes to work or watering our lawns less frequently, we can all play a role in minimizing the consumption of Central Florida's natural resources and, in turn, make our communities better places to live.

The City of Orlando is striving to make a long-term ecological difference through Mayor Buddy Dyer's green initiative. This program, titled Green Works Orlando, is designed to provide residents the tools and information they need to become more environmentally responsible, conserve natural resources, increase the amount of trees and green spaces in the city and invest in green buildings, vehicles and materials.

### OFD Goes Green

Although their fire trucks are still the customary red, the Orlando Fire Department has opted to go green with the first "green certified" firehouse, which opened in Lake Nona last September. Having obtained the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, Lake Nona Fire Station 15, located at Narcoossee Road and Savannah Park Drive, was the first "green" firehouse in the state of Florida and set a benchmark for other city building projects to comply with LEED certification stanards.

According to Deputy Fire Chief **Mark Oakes**, the new "green" firehouses will minimize maintenance costs in the future and leave less of an environmental footprint on the community landscape. With Orlando's population on the rise, it's crucial to maintain an adequate response time to 911 emergencies while still maintaining the eco-friendly initiatives set forth by the Green Works Orlando program.

"The Orlando Fire Department was recently awarded the Insurance Service Organization's highest rating," Oakes says. "Our goal is to have one fire station every two road miles with an average response time of four minutes."

Lake Nona Fire Station 15 (above) was completed in September and sports a brightly painted green roof to complement its lush landscaping and other "green" specifications, like pre-cast "tilt" concrete walls (right).



### Lower Maintenance, Longer Service

Chief Oakes oversaw the construction process from start to finish of the Lake Nona firehouse and says that numerous specifications needed to be taken into account in obtaining LEED certification here in the state of Florida. He says that some of the unique design aspects of the firehouse include pre-cast "tilt" concrete walls, immediate disposal or recycling of construction materials, more grass or landscaping on the lot and a concrete driveway to reflect heat rather than absorb it, as asphalt does.

"Having motion detected lights, metal roofs and reclaimed water for irrigation also helps to lower maintenance costs," Oakes says. The City of Orlando is planning to have all new construction projects meet LEED certification standards with more firehouses following suit alongside Lake Nona Fire Station 15 in the coming months.

"These new 'green' firehouses will be in service for at least 30 to 50 years, saving taxpayers significant amounts in both energy costs and rising construction costs," Oakes says. Two of the new "green" stations currently under construction are Station 16, at Lake Nona Boulevard and Nona Gate Drive, and Station 14, at Econlockhatchee Trail and Lee Vista Road. ■

**WEB LIFE** To find out more about Green Works Orlando and "green" buildings, visit [www.CentralFlorida-Lifestyle.com](http://www.CentralFlorida-Lifestyle.com).