

For Immediate Release

For additional information contact:
Jake Thompson, Marketing Director
251.968.9253 | j.thompson@highlandgroup.org



Pictured: Panama City Beach firefighters from Fire Station 30 performing training exercises using their own station as the fire scene.

The Highland Group Selected as General Contractor for Panama City Beach Fire Department Training Facility

February 24, 2023 (Panama City Beach, FL) – [The City of Panama City Beach](#), Florida has named The Highland Group, a real estate development and commercial construction firm, as the general contractor for the construction of a live-fire training tower for Panama City Beach Fire Rescue. The City’s plans are to construct a training tower near [Fire Station 30](#) off Nautilus Street to help Panama City Beach Fire Rescue and other departments in Bay County, Florida hone their skills in a state-of-the-art facility. The project will be funded by a [\\$600,000 grant from the Florida Legislature and \\$150,000 from the city’s general funds](#).

“We are looking to make sure we have the best fire and police team we can have out there,” [Mayor Mark Sheldon said](#). “This fire tower will give our fire department an amazing resource to make sure they are trained, and they have the best opportunity to do the best they can for our citizens.”

The four-story training tower will include about [7,000 square feet of training space](#), allowing firefighters to practice rescues in simulated residential and urban settings. Currently, firefighters from PCB’s surrounding municipalities train for those situations in a handful of condominiums and other locations provided by the city. The new training tower will provide fire

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rescue teams a controlled environment to better simulate “real fire conditions” and allow their crews to practice mitigating those situations in a fully operational manner.

“Having a facility that we can simulate true live-fire conditions and real-world conditions just betters and hardens our team to protect all he residents and visitors,” [Chief Ray Morgan of Panama City Beach Fire Rescue said](#). “The better training that we can provide...the better firefighters we can offer to the public.”

The tower will be located behind the Panama City Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant, putting the facility near PCBFRD’s Fire Station 30, the city’s newest \$5 million facility built to better suit their fire department. The land where the tower will stand will need to be cleared before construction can begin, with the final plans currently in the design phase. Highland is expected to complete construction on the facility sometime next year.

“It’s an honor to be able to assist Panama City Beach Fire Rescue in the construction of this training facility,” said Highland’s Florida Office Senior Project Manager Jeff Wiater “The ultimate goal of this project is to provide these firefighters the most state-of-the-art tower we can build. They need to be able to practice at max capacity so they can operate efficiently and that’s exactly what we’re going to help them achieve with this project,” added Wiater.

[Panama City Beach Fire Rescue Department \(PCBFRD\)](#)

Panama City Beach’s Fire Rescue Department serve the approximately 15,000 residents and 4.5 million visitors to the world’s most beautiful beaches each year. PCBFR is an [ISO class 2](#) Advanced Life Support non-transport fire department serving a rapidly growing community. They have three fire stations strategically placed on the east, west, and central portions of the city. The department also added a Beach Safety Division in fir2019 including several programs staffed with full-time beach rescue responders, and seasonal staff who monitor the city’s beaches year-round. The department’s fire inspectors also perform annual life safety inspections on all new building construction, building remodels, commercial businesses, and transient rentals within the city.

[About The Highland Group:](#)

The Highland Group is a real estate development and commercial construction firm that specializes in real estate development, preconstruction services, general contracting, construction management, and design-build delivery. Their mission is to develop leaders committed to higher standards who have an impact on their firm and the communities in which they work and live by developing trusting

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relationships and building quality projects. The Highland Group has offices located in the Gulf Coast Region (501 South McKenzie Street, Suite 2, Foley, Alabama, 36535), the Tennessee Valley Region (415-H Church Street NW, Suite 201, Huntsville, Alabama, 35801), and the Florida Panhandle Region (130 Richard Jackson Blvd., Suite 104A, Panama City Beach, Florida, 32407). They have been proudly serving clients throughout the Southeastern United States since 2005. Learn more at www.HighlandGroup.org