



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
South Carolina Fire Academy
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Ken Kerber, Superintendent



For Immediate Release:

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State Fire Academy Graduates 29 in September

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 29 students, Friday, Sept. 26, 2014, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Will Vaigneur, Battalion Chief, with Lady's Island/ St. Helena Fire Department.

The firefighters from 22 fire departments across the state and two out-of-country departments underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development.

The in-depth training, offered quarterly at the Fire Academy, includes emergency responder first aid training, hazardous materials operations training, auto extrication, flammable liquids and gas firefighting, rescue training, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firefighter I and Firefighter II levels.

"This is a very challenging program that requires team work, in-depth study, extensive hands-on training with live fires, eight practical skills evaluations and seven written tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards," Fire Academy Branch Chief Lenny Busby, said. "I am pleased with the students and our staff; they have shown extreme commitment to service by completing this challenging and comprehensive program. Our state and their communities will be better served as a result of their efforts."

The following students graduated Friday, Sept. 26, 2014:

- Joseph Alcock Ascension Fire Department
- Clayton Andrews Ascension Fire Department
- Cory Bagwell Three & Twenty Fire Department
- Christopher Becker C & B Volunteer Fire Department
- Preston Bradley Lady's Island / St. Helena Fire Department
- Christopher Brady Williford Fire Department
- Donald Braithwaite Antigua Fire Department
- Caleb Carter Simpsonville Fire Department
- Alexander Dalton Pickens Fire Department
- Ronald Gerrish Anderson City Fire Department
- Russell Gresham Old Fort Fire Department
- Stuart Hardy Burton Fire District
- Christopher Jones Flint Hill Fire Department
- Timothy Lanigan Cayce Department of Public Safety

- Wilson Lewis Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Erich Lindemann Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Wesley Morris Clarendon County Fire Department
- Rafael Nepaulsingh Burton Fire District
- Corey Poulson Salem Fire Department
- Ryan Reed Montmorenci Volunteer Fire Department
- Seth Schraeder Dorchester County Fire Rescue
- Todd Smith C & B Volunteer Fire Department
- James St. John Jr. Antigua Fire Department
- Griff Strock Beaufort Fire Rescue
- Terry Sutcliffe Lady's Island / St. Helena Fire Department
- Willie Watson Hartsville City Fire Department
- David Weatherly Sardis Timmons ville Fire Department
- Austin Weathersbee Converse Fire Department
- De'Andre Woods Ridgeland Fire Department

The following awards were presented:

Order of the Maltese – Ronald Gerrish

The Maltese Cross is a firefighter's badge of honor, signifying he or she works in courage – a ladder rung away from death. The Eight Obligations of The Maltese Cross are: Live in Truth, Have Faith, Repent of Sins, Give Proof of Humility, Love Justice, Be Sincere and Whole-Hearted, Be Merciful, and Endure Persecution.

This award is chosen by the part-time instructors and students.

Chief Robert Frick – Erich Lindemann

The Chief Robert Frick Award is given to the student with the highest grade point average.

Pride of the Battalion – Rafael Nepaulsingh

The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the student who has demonstrated Leadership, Integrity, Determination and Good Value.

This award is chosen by the full-time instructor staff members who have worked with the students during the eight-week program.

The Fire Academy provides emergency services training to the municipal fire service - both paid and volunteer - airport crash rescue departments, industrial fire brigades and emergency teams and service organizations including EMS, law enforcement and military from around the state and the world. The Fire Academy is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress for 14 NFPA firefighter levels.

The Fire Academy and the State Fire Marshal's Office make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.