



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
South Carolina Fire Academy
141 Monticello Trail • Columbia, SC 29203
Phone: 803-896-9800 • Fax: 803-896-9856 • www.llronline.com



Ken Kerber, Superintendent

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Lesia Kudelka, Communications Director
S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
(803) 896-4376
Date: Dec. 4, 2015

State Fire Academy Graduates 23 in December

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 23 recruits, Friday, Dec. 4, 2015, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Assistant Chief Elliott DeBiase, Hardeeville Fire Department.

The firefighters from 10 fire departments across the state, and one international department, 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, and extensive hands-on training tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards," Fire Academy Branch Chief Lenny Busby said. "I am pleased with the recruits 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 recruits graduated Friday, Dec. 4, 2015:

- Darren Amick, Columbia Metro Airport
- Demetrius Barr, Mt. Pleasant Fire Department
- Adam Craft, North Charleston Fire Department
- Matthew Garnes, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Timothy Gaston, Union Public Safety
- Isaiah Graham, North Charleston Fire Department
- Nathan Greer, Hardeeville Fire Department
- Billy Harper, Jr., St. Johns Fire District
- Theodore Hawks, III, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Stephen Jansen, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Kyle Lomprez, Hardeeville Fire Department
- Kenneth McClees, St. Johns Fire District
- Vasont Miller, Bluffton Township Fire District
- Steven Shock, Tigerville Fire Department
- Mark Small, Whitesville Fire Department
- William St. Louis, Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Leonard Steed, Mt. Pleasant Fire Department
- Justin Stonehill, North Augusta Public Safety
- Brandon Upton, Folly Beach Public Safety
- Philip Watson, St. Johns Fire District
- John Weaver, Mt. Pleasant Fire Department

- Lionel Williams, Jr. , Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Thomas Willingham, Union City Public Safety

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Kenneth McClees, St. Johns Fire District

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

This award is chosen by the class recruits.

Chief Robert Frick – Theodore Hawks, III, Bluffton Township Fire District

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

Pride of the Battalion – Nathan Greer, Hardeeville Fire Department

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

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits 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 and National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) for multiple 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.