



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
South Carolina Fire Academy
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Phillip Russell, Acting Superintendent



For Immediate Release:

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State Fire Academy Graduates 20 in December

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 20 recruits, Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Justin McLellan, Lancaster City Fire Department.

The firefighters from 14 fire departments across the state, as well as the Kentucky Air National Guard Fire 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, 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 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 Dec. 9, 2016:

- Brett Ballentine, McCrady Fire Department
- Jessica Berie, St. Johns Fire Department
- Codie Catoe, Kershaw Fire Department
- Drew Conrad, Pine Ridge Fire Department
- Quentin Harris, Lancaster City Fire Department
- Cory Hartigan, Pine Ridge Fire Department
- Dakota Hash, Center Rock Fire Department
- Christopher Herndon, St. Johns Fire Department
- Xavier Hussey, West Columbia Fire Department
- Matthew Morgan, Sullivan's Island Fire Department
- Jonathan Pitman, Westminster Fire Department
- Buffie Prince, Lake City Fire Department
- Logan Ramsey, Kentucky Air National Guard Fire Department
- Richard Rea, Summerville Fire Department
- Tyler Roberts, Lady's Island Fire Department
- Michael Sarracino, Lady's Island Fire Department
- Kimberly Sperbeck, Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Andrew Tate, Kentucky Air National Guard Fire Department
- Austin Terry, Florence Fire Department
- Dawson Williams, Pine Ridge Fire Department



Front row, left to right: Quentin Harris, Lancaster City Fire Department; Dawson Williams, Pine Ridge Fire Department; Christopher Herndon, St. Johns Fire Department; Buffie Prince, Lake City Fire Department; Jessica Berie, St. Johns Fire Department; and Kimberly Sperbeck, Cayce Department of Public Safety

Second row, left to right: Michael Sarracino, Lady's Island Fire Department; Tyler Roberts, Lady's Island Fire Department; Richard Rea, Summerville Fire Department; Logan Ramsey, Kentucky Air National Guard Fire Department; and Codie Catoe, Kershaw Fire Department

Third row, left to right: Brett Ballentine, McCrady Fire Department; Drew Conrad, Pine Ridge Fire Department; Austin Terry, Florence Fire Department; and Andrew Tate, Kentucky Air National Guard Fire Department

Top row, left to right: Matthew Morgan, Sullivan's Island Fire Department; Jonathan Pitman, Westminster Fire Department; Cory Hartigan, Pine Ridge Fire Department; Dakota Hash, Center Rock Fire Department; and Xavier Hussey, West Columbia Fire Department

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Jonathan Pitman, Westminster Fire Department

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 – Brett Ballentine, McCrady Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion – Drew Conrad, Pine Ridge 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.