



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 23 in February**

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 23 recruits, Friday, Feb. 26, 2016, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Matthew McDowell, City of North Charleston Fire Department.

The firefighters from 15 fire departments across the state, and one out-of-country 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 Feb. 26, 2016:

- Joshua Almond, Tyger River Fire Department
- Joseph Anderson, no affiliation
- Juan Andrew, Parker Fire District
- Rebecca Barnett, Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Donnell Boyles, Spartanburg City Fire Department
- John Centrone, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Kyle Conlan, Edisto Beach Fire Department
- Brian Cox, Burton Fire Department
- Kenneth Fisk, Edisto Beach Fire Department
- Kayla Garrett, Union City Fire Department
- Lucas Graham, Dorchester County Fire/ Rescue
- Rashaun Grant, Walterboro Fire Department
- Robert Hope, Union City Fire Department
- David Irvin, Edisto Beach Fire Department
- Jon Kizer, Edisto Beach Fire Department
- Shena Paris, Virgin Island Port Authority
- Aaron Parris, Easley Fire Department
- Sarah Perez, Virgin Island Port Authority
- Chad Price, Columbia Fire Department
- Zachary Shipman, Boiling Springs Fire Department

- Al-Jarrood Sumpster, Santee Fire Department
- Kayle Wielkie, Awendaw Fire Department
- Nicholas Williamsen, Burton Fire Department

The following awards were also presented:

**Order of the Maltese – Joseph Anderson, Open Enrollment**

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 – David Irvin, Edisto Beach Fire Department**

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

**Pride of the Battalion – Brian Cox, Burton 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.