



**For Immediate Release:**

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**State Fire Academy Graduates 21 in September**

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 21 recruits, Friday, Sept. 29, 2017, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Battalion Chief Scott Feather, Colleton County Fire Rescue.

The firefighters from 14 fire departments across the state, and one open enrollment recruit, 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 Training Section 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, Sept. 29, 2017:

- William Baxley, Bethune Fire Department
- Thomas J. Chamberlain, St. Johns Fire District
- Brandon DeLoach, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Branden Dias, Colleton County Fire Rescue
- John Guard, Oconee County Emergency Services
- Missy Hook, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Britt Horne, Sullivan's Island Fire Department
- Michael Houseman, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- John Howell, Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Chris Madden, Six Mile Fire Department
- Chris McGirt, Georgetown Fire Department
- Robert McKelvey, Cayce Department of Public Safety
- Brendan Montesi, Corinth-Shiloh Volunteer Fire Department
- Ann Moseley, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Zach Myers, Open Enrollment
- Chad Rhinehart, Sumter Fire Department
- Edgar Sada, St. Johns Fire District
- Andreas Satterfield, Corinth-Shiloh Volunteer Fire Department
- Stuart Shepherd, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Ross J. Thompson, St. Johns Fire District
- Shea Williams, Mayo Fire District

The following awards were also presented:

**Order of the Maltese – Edgar Sada, St. Johns Fire District**

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, 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 – Melissa Hook, Aiken Public Safety**

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

**Pride of the Battalion – Ann Mosley, Aiken Public Safety**

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.