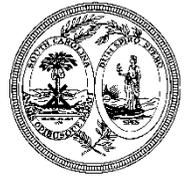




South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
South Carolina Fire Academy
141 Monticello Trail • Columbia, SC 29203
Phone: 803-896-9800 • Fax: 803-896-9856 • www.llronline.com
Dennis Ray, Academy Superintendent



For Immediate Release:

Contact: Susan Duncan, Office Manager
S.C. Division of Fire and Life Safety
(803) 896-5790
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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. 8, 2017, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. Keynote speaker was Chief Keith Minick, City of Newberry Fire Department.

The firefighters from 15 fire departments across the state 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.

"Our South Carolina fire service has been enhanced with the successful completion and graduation of these 20 new firefighters who will now be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and our state," Fire Academy Superintendent Dennis Ray said. "The solid commitment, passion, and dedication displayed by each of these recruits the past eight weeks have paid off with their successful ability to work together, perform extensive hands-on skills, and handle intense written tests. I am proud of their accomplishment, and commend the dedicated Academy instructors who brought them through these eight weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated Dec. 8, 2017:

- Joshua Adams, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Spencer Atkinson, Mount Pleasant Fire Department
- Hunter Beard, Tyger River Fire Department
- Richard Doran, City of Newberry Fire Department
- Michael Eubanks, Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Matthew Faust, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- Kaleb Hall, Ridgeland Fire Department
- Evan Hernandez, North Augusta Department of Public Safety
- Kody Jacobs, City of Newberry Fire Department
- Gary Leazer, Tigerville Fire Department
- Daniel Mickel, Burton Fire District
- Oba Mubarak, Mount Pleasant Fire Department
- Jordan Pfeil, Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue
- William Preston, Simpsonville Fire Department
- Kevin Reed, West Florence Fire Department
- Max Rudolph, Colleton County Fire-Rescue
- Jalen J. Simon, Lee County Fire Department
- Paul Sottile, Sullivan's Island Fire Department
- Chandler Tisdale, Marion City Fire Department

- Jacob Wilson, Colleton County Fire-Rescue

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Daniel Mickel, Burton 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 – Daniel Mickel, Burton Fire District

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

Pride of the Battalion – Oba Mubarak, Mount Pleasant 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 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. Its mission is to be the State's focal point for service and support to save life and property.