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Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



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South Carolina Fire Academy

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State Fire Academy Graduates 26 in May

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's South Carolina Fire Academy graduated 26 recruits, Friday, May 7, 2021, from its eight-week firefighter candidate school in Columbia. These firefighters underwent a 320-hour training program of classroom and hands-on firefighting skills development. Keynote speaker was Captain Steven Gillespie, North Charleston City Fire Department.

"This challenging program requires commitment, passion, and dedication," Fire Academy Superintendent Dennis Ray said. "These recruits have successfully worked together as a team, performed extensive hands-on training with live fires, and passed intensive practical skills evaluations and written tests to meet the National Fire Protection Association standards."

The comprehensive 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. Additionally, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes were made to class structure and facilities to promote social distancing and recommended precautions.

"With the successful completion and graduation of these new firefighters who will now be dedicating their lives to serving their communities and the state, our South Carolina fire service is enhanced," Ray said. "I am proud of their accomplishments, and I also commend the dedicated Fire Academy instructors who brought the recruits through these weeks of instruction leading to graduation."

The following recruits graduated May 7, 2021:

- Malik Brown – Union Public Safety
- Andrew Christie – Bluffton Township Fire District
- Emmett Dangerfield, IV – Moncks Corner Fire Department
- Jeremiah DeLoach – Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue
- Kenyon Fitzharris – Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue
- Michael Flood – Hilton Head Island Fire & Rescue
- Glenn Francis – Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Brian Freeman – Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Gianni Garcia – Open Enrollment
- Malik Harris – Union Public Safety
- Deshawn Hewitt – Virgin Islands Port Authority

- Cody Hill – Union Public Safety
- Brian Jawish – North Charleston Fire Department
- William Johnson – North Charleston City Department
- Anique Cruz – Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Sydney Mardsen – Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Carlos Mateu – Simpsonville Fire Department
- Ryan Meadows – Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Andrew Nowell – North Charleston Fire Department
- Jonathan Prince – Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Sydney Reynolds – North Charleston Fire Department
- Dylan Ruberto – Moncks Corner Fire Department
- Tanner Sapp – McCrady Fire & Emergency Services
- Larry Smith – Greenwood City Fire Department
- Christopher Strazzella – Jasper County Fire-Rescue
- Keyshawn Suitt – North Charleston Fire Department

The following awards were also presented:

Order of the Maltese – Carlos Mateu – Simpsonville Fire Department

This award recipient is chosen by the class recruits. 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.

Chief Robert Frick – William Johnson – North Charleston City Fire Department

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

Pride of the Battalion – Andrew Nowell – North Charleston City Fire Department

This award recipient is chosen by the instructor staff who worked with the recruits during the eight-week program. The Pride of the Battalion award is given to the recruit who has demonstrated “Leadership, Integrity, Determination, and Good Value.”

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.