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Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Chief Jansen honored with Hall of Fame induction

Most of the moments in our lives are small and mundane, completely inconsequential to our futures. But there are others, like when a young **John Jansen** saw the New York City Fire Department work a house fire in his neighborhood, that set the sails on our life's course.

"The first thing I ever saw I wanted to do was be a firefighter... I didn't plan on doing anything else," retired Columbia Richland Fire Chief John Jansen reminisced.

Chief Jansen was recently honored with induction into the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association **Hall of Fame**, cementing his legacy as an influential figure in the South Carolina fire service. He was bestowed the award during the Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

Chief Jansen's journey in the fire service started decades before he moved to the Palmetto State. A native of Staten Island, New York, Jansen's first exposure to the world of firefighting was when he became a member of the city's auxiliary department; it wasn't long before he joined the New York Fire Patrol, a salvage entity that worked hand-in-hand with FDNY on Class 3 calls that needed extra manpower.

After several years on the Fire Patrol, Jansen moved to Hartford,

Connecticut, and got involved with training. He taught at both the Connecticut Fire Academy and the National Fire Academy, networking with fire service professionals from across the country, and developed a passion for standardized training.

“When you get into the fire service, especially in the northeast part the country, it’s a real strict, old-school operation... nobody would introduce anything new into the department because the chiefs wouldn’t allow it to happen,” Chief Jansen said.

That old-school mentality wouldn’t cut it for Chief Jansen.

“If you think something needs to be changed, don’t be afraid to say it,” he said.

Chief Jansen brought his experience with volunteers, countywide departments, codes, hazardous materials, and standardized training to Columbia in 1991 after a brief stint in New Orleans, a few years in North Dakota as State Fire Marshal, and some time in Albany, Georgia.

He’d heard through the fire service grapevine that leadership was looking to consolidate the city and county departments, something he had experience with in Albany. He checked off a lot of boxes with his previous experiences and was ultimately named the man for the job.

“I tried saying ‘y’all’ a lot, don’t know that it did any good,” laughed Chief Jansen about his early days in the Soda City. “It was an exciting time, every day something new.”

“The job of a firefighter is a good job,” he stated. “It’s a good profession... you can make a lot of difference in communities by providing good service.”

Chief Jansen’s words of wisdom for the next generation of firefighters stays true to his passion for training.

“Learn the job as best you can. Stay with it as things change... make sure that you can turn around and tell somebody new coming in why you’re doing what you’re doing, and what the rationale is for what you’re doing.”

[Watch our full interview with Chief Jansen.](#)

Association news



Strategic Planning Committee announces objectives for 2023-28

The **Strategic Planning Committee** has released the final objectives for the Association through 2028. The Executive Committee approved the 5-year planning document during its meeting on Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

In his message to the membership, **President Burns** shares in the opening letter, "The following document is the 2023—2028 Strategic Plan for your South Carolina State Firefighters' Association. The goals and strategies found within outline the next five years and beyond.

The Executive Committee utilizes the Strategic Plan to guide our decision making process for the current operation of the Association and as a roadmap to guide us into the future. The Strategic Planning Committee has worked hard to update this latest revision of the plan using input from our Members, Association Staff, and the Executive Committee. We hope that you will provide any ideas and suggestions that you may have to the Committee by completing any surveys or any other means of solicitation for input that may be presented throughout the year."

Kevin Henson, chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, writes in the Executive Summary, "The Association's leadership and staff are fully committed to achieving these goals and associated objectives. Our primary aim is to provide exceptional customer service and support to our valued members, recognizing that firefighters like you are the greatest asset of the South Carolina fire service."

Core goals of the 2023—2028 Strategic Plan include:

- Ensure that the South Carolina Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund (1%) is maintained and ensure its future.
- Ensure funding for the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association matches the strategic goals and objectives.
- Evaluate benefits, programs, and services offered to the members of the Association.
- Establish a viable plan for historical preservation and display of relevant items acquired.
- Evaluate the complexity, efficiency and workload of the South Carolina Firefighters' Association staff. Enhance the communication of Association benefits and offerings to members.
- Enhance the communication and coordination with partner associations, agencies, and groups. Provide fire service leadership development and educational opportunities for members of the Association.

Take a look at the [2023—2028 Strategic Plan](#).





SURVEY: Ballistic Protective Equipment Use

NC State Wilson College of Textiles has partnered with **FIERO** to research the performance tradeoffs associated with firefighter use of Ballistic Protective Equipment. The objective of this research, funded by a FEMA AFG Fire Prevention and Safety grant, is to fill gaps in the available information needed by firefighters for the selection and use of PPE for ballistic protection.

The survey is open to all firefighters (career and volunteer), and is completely anonymous. [Fill out the survey.](#)



From NIOSH: Firefighter Communication and Safety

Clear communication on the fireground can make all the difference. One of the harsh realities of the job is that good radio communications can be a matter of life or death. Do *you* know how to effectively and efficiently use your radio?

The **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** released recently its Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) reports, detailing that communication failures are a recurring contributing factor in firefighter deaths. These communications breakdowns are related to a lack of training, equipment issues, and ineffective procedures.

[Read more from the FFFIPP report.](#)

Community event



Forestry Commission hosting Horse + Buggy Show

The **Forestry Commission** is hosting its Fire Department Horse and Buggy Show Saturday, Oct. 21 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Forestry Commission Headquarters (5500 Broad River Road in Columbia). Departments should bring at least one piece of converted federal surplus equipment that they received from the Forestry Commission for a “show and tell.”

The event also features a truck pull from 10-11 a.m. Teams of 5-7 people should register on-site and all payments made to Special Olympics of South Carolina. Cost is \$100 per team and all funds from the truck pull will go to Special Olympics of South Carolina.

Vote for your favorite vehicle, eat (food and drinks provided!) and mingle from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The Forestry Commission will have a table set up for departments to talk about the Federal Surplus Property and Grant programs.

Please contact [Jonathan Calore](mailto:Jonathan.Calore@sc.gov) [(803) 667-1200] with questions.

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- [August 24 - 1% Regional Training Class: Beaufort County](#)
- [October 1-6 - Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer class 23-02](#)
- [October 17 - 1% Regional Training Class: York County](#)
- October 25 - Quarterly Training + Business Meeting
- June 12-15, 2024 - Fire-Rescue



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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