



FEBRUARY 16, 2023 | ISSUE 38

# Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



## Black History Month Spotlight: Leuitant Selena Smith Ruth

**Selena Ruth Smith** always knew she wanted to work in ministry. When the local fire department visited her church to recruit volunteers, it piqued her interested, but she had already mailed her application to be a missionary with the United Methodist Church.

Her application was never received.

“I think that was a God moment, saying, ‘You don’t have to be a missionary overseas, I want you to do missionary work, you’re going to do it in the form of firefighting... I want you to stay in your local community, and that’s how you’re going to do your ministry,’” Selena said.

She spent her first few years in the fire service as a volunteer, splitting her time between work and the fire department. In the years since, Selena transitioned to a career position as Lieutenant in the Community Risk Reduction Division at **Sumter Fire Department**.

As a Black woman, she’s humbled by the support she receives from the community.

“To me, I’m just a firefighter,” she continued, “but when I go out and see little girls and they’re like ‘oh, you can be a firefighter?’ I’m like, ‘yeah, you can be a firefighter!’”

Selena finds that even how she presents herself goes a long way in bridging barriers in the eyes of little ones. She's growing out her hair, and young Black girls are in awe that a firefighter can have locs.

"It's one of those things that if you can't see it, you wouldn't believe it," Selena continued.

February is **Black History Month** and Selena firmly believes that it's a year-round endeavor. She describes the month as being dedicated to equity.

"It's all about the fairness and the justice, and being just," she said. "Even though you're sitting at the table, are you having a chance to talk at that table?"

At the end of the day, Selena knows that when she puts on her gear, she's genderless and colorless – *she's just qualified to do the job.*

"You can be as brown and dark as you want to, because in a fire, they don't know what color you are."



## Association event



## Memorial Service photos are available

**"Those we love never truly leave us. There are things that death cannot touch." - Jack Thorne**

We held on Saturday, February 12, the annual Firefighter Memorial Service.

Thank you, families, for allowing us to remember your loved ones. It is an absolute honor and we pray the service brought you comfort.

Pictures from the Memorial Service are [available](#). Stay tuned in the coming weeks for a video of the service.

## Community event



### **FIERO PPE Summit: Early bird pricing ends Feb. 17**

The **Fire Industry Education Resource Organization** (FIERO) is hosting a **PPE Symposium** March 19-22, 2023 at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Greenville. Early bird registration ends February 17. Space is limited and available strictly on a first come basis—[save your spot](#).



### **ICYMI: Association gear is available**

We've partnered with **Emerald Ink and Stitches** to launch a new [online store](#) for you to buy Association gear. Payment is easy and your items are shipped straight to you.

In addition to Association gear, you'll order your [Fire-Rescue](#) t-shirt, hats, and other accessories through the online store. If you're more of a brick-and-mortar shopper, Fire-Rescue items will also be available for purchase

during conference, June 14-17 in Myrtle Beach.

## News from the State House



### Legislative Day agenda summary

[Legislative Day](#) is **Wednesday, April 5** on the grounds of the State House.

It is important for the us to support South Carolina State Fire and its requests through the legislature on many different budget items. LLR and State Fire have requested \$3 million non-recurring dollars for the **Volunteer Strategic Assistance and Fire Equipment (V-SAFE)** program, which allows chartered volunteer fire departments and chartered combination departments to apply for grants to purchase equipment and training services.

In addition to State Fire's funding requests, the legislature has legislation that is significant to our fire service and its personnel, to include **Return to Work, Income Tax Relief**, and **Pal-800 Radio System** upgrades and user fees reduction.

You can find the latest Legislative happenings, courtesy of our lobbyists Stewart, Konduros, and Associates, on our [website](#).

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- March 5-10 - Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer
- [March 16 - 1% Regional Training, Spartanburg County](#)
- [April 5 - Legislative Day](#)
- [April 20 - 1% Regional Training Class: Berkeley](#)

[County](#)

- [May 16 + 17 - Cleveland School Fire Remembrance](#)



**South Carolina State Firefighters' Association**

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