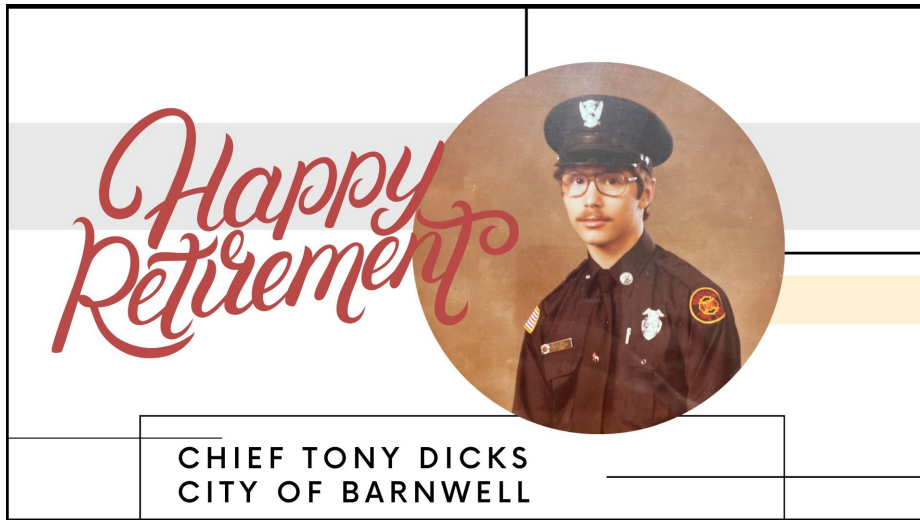




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Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Celebrating the career of Chief Tony Dicks

The city of Barnwell, population just under 4,500, is home for **Tony Dicks**. He lives in the house his great grandfather built and his father was born in. The house was moved from Dunbarton to its current location in Barnwell when the Savannah River Site was built, moving from one “blink and you’ll miss it” town to another.

Mr. **Horace Dicks**, Tony’s dad and first mentor, was a volunteer firefighter for years prior to serving as City of Barnwell Fire Chief from 1972-77. Tony went to his first call at a young 4 years old, and even as a child, he was hooked.

“If I was old enough and strong enough, I could get out in his pickup truck and ride to the fire and look through the windshield. If I dared get out the truck, I’d get my tail tore up,” Tony reminisced. “Everywhere daddy went, I tried to go.”

Tony officially joined the department on his 15th birthday. After high school, he started working at the local parts store but remained an active member of the department. He heard through a friend that the Orangeburg Fire Department was hiring, and it wasn’t long before he was picking up and moving a county over. As fate would have it, Tony met his future wife, **Debbie**, during his 4-year stint in Orangeburg.

The couple briefly moved back to Barnwell after Tony’s career took a

minor detour when he started working in industrial fire protection. The Dicks would relocate to Islandton—where Tony served as volunteer fire chief—while Tony was working at Starmet, and he made the commute for almost 4 years; after a few years, he wanted something closer to home, so he worked for the Colleton County Parks and Recreation for a while, and then the Walterboro Fire Department.

Eventually, Starmet called and asked if he would consider coming back, prompting the final Dicks family move back to Barnwell.

“Getting back to Barnwell, I got involved with the fire department again as a volunteer and stayed that way until the plant decided it was time to let me go,” Tony said. “Right after that, I got the phone call that says, ‘Would you like to be the fire chief?’ I said, ‘Surely.’”

“It took a while but in about May of ‘99 they were able to approve it at the Council level and put me to work... I’ve been there ever since.”

Chief Dicks got his start on the state level when the Fire Academy was at its original location by the airport. It was through his work with the Academy that he would meet **Joe Palmer**, forging a friendship and mutual respect that is still going strong.

“Tony is one of the most personable and likable persons I have ever met,” Joe said. “Genuine, thoughtful, and sneaky smart.”

Tony was a regular attendee of the annual Fire-Rescue conference so he was familiar with the Association. When he was approached by then Health and Safety Committee Chair **Doug Eggiman**, Midway Fire and Rescue Chief (retired), he enthusiastically said yes. He would later serve on the Recruitment and Retention Committee. It was during his tenure on the R&R Committee that Joe asked Tony if he would like to represent South Carolina on the National Volunteer Fire Council, a commitment he upheld for a decade.

“I learned a lot about the South Carolina fire service and the South Carolina State Firefighters’ Association is well-advanced beyond some states that you think would just have it going on,” Tony said about his time serving on NVFC and networking with representatives throughout the country.

In addition to his longtime service as State Director for NVFC and work with several Association committees, Tony currently serves on the Heritage Committee, is a regular speaker for Leadership Institute, was a panelist at the Volunteer Criticality Summit in 2022, served as a national “Peer Review” for AFG/SAFER applications, was President of Lowerstate Firefighters Association, and can often be found at the grill cooking for a variety of Association events. Tony was inducted into the South Carolina Firefighters Hall of Fame in 2017.

Now, after 24 years as Fire Chief and five decades of service, Chief Dicks is retiring.

“I’m proud of what I was able to do at the fire department,” he said. “It took a while, but we were able to get things moving forward.”

“When you know a community like Tony knows Barnwell, you can’t help but advance your cause for the betterment of those involved,” Joe Palmer said. “Tony has taken his experience of years of service at the national

level and put in to play concepts that has brought BFD together and made an incredible farm team that now has persons working around the state.”

When asked about his proudest accomplishment, Tony gave the answer most fathers do: his children, and the fact that they each chose a service-focused profession. One of his daughters is a teacher and the other is a nurse. His son is a Captain at City of Florence Fire.

“The fire service was good for me, even though I went around it two or three different times,” Tony said.

Although he may be officially retired, don’t be surprised if you see Chief Dicks hanging around the new Barnwell station when construction is complete. Old habits are hard to quit.

Association deadline



Fire-Rescue speaker applications due September 30

The South Carolina fire service is overflowing with talent, and we strongly believe in the value local speakers bring to conference. We are proud to provide our members with a platform that allows them to continue to progress the fire service as a whole and grow as individuals. Fire-Rescue provides speakers an opportunity to educate, network, and expand their brand.

If you're knowledgeable and passionate about a topic and have a program developed, consider applying to speak at Fire-Rescue, June 12-15, 2024 and allow the Training and Education Committee the opportunity to review your application.

Make sure to submit your [application](#) by September 30, 2023 to meet the deadline.

Member benefits

MATTRESS FIRM[®]

Save big at Mattress Firm

The **Member Benefits Committee** is always looking for ways to provide dollar savings for our membership. The latest member benefit might put you to sleep—*literally*.

We've partnered with **Mattress Firm** to provide individuals and fire departments with discounted rates on mattresses.

As a first responder, you bravely serve, protect, and save lives and property. Mattress Firm is saying “thank you” with a special Home Mattress Discount Program. Through this program, you will be able to purchase mattresses for your home for up to 40% off retail; fire departments can receive up to 50% off.

Individuals

To get started on your purchase, complete [this form](#) and send it back to our Mattress Firm Sleep Expert, Kevin McGrath at kevin.mcgrath@mfrm.com, as an attached photo or PDF file or hit “submit” at the end of the form. Kevin will work with you to select your mattress(es) and process the order for delivery and set-up.

Fire departments

Mattress Firm assists fire departments across the country with purchasing top quality mattresses, platform frames, and encasements to outfit the crew sleeping quarters. Mattress Firm offers prices that can save a department up to 50% off what they would spend on mattresses and accessories in a typical retail store.


There are no minimum order quantities with this program. Whether you are conducting mattress replacement projects of 100 mattresses across 7 stations or need just 1 mattress, you can tap into the discount pricing of the program. The [Top 9 Fire Department Mattress List](#) is a snapshot of popular mattresses across the country, but you aren't limited to what's on the list. You can search hundreds of mattresses on the [Mattress Firm](#) web site, and if there is a particular mattress that you are interested in, please email Kevin to get the fire department discount price for that mattress.

Reach Kevin Monday through Friday, 10am-7pm on 346-718-5127 or at kevin.mcgrath@mfrm.com.

Community events

In Honor of National First Responders Day

FIRST RESPONDERS NIGHT



ft. Touch-A-Truck on the Plaza with Trunk-or-Treating

Save the date: Greenville Swamp Rabbit's

First Responder Night

Upstate friends, the Greenville Swamp Rabbits is hosting First Responder Night on Friday, October 27. Bring the family for touch-a-truck and trunk-or-treating before the game. [Buy your tickets.](#)



FIERO's Station Design Symposium is next month

Our friends at **Fire Industry Education Resource Organization** (FIERO) are hosting a Station Design Symposium at the Hyatt Regency Greenville from Sept. 24-27 where attendees will learn the latest innovative ideas about contamination control, streamlined design, cost-saving measures, and environmentally friendly practices that can be employed in and around your emergency facilities.

View the full schedule and [register](#) for the symposium.

Fox Carolina News feature




Picture credits to Fox Carolina News video interview

Meet Jean and Ann, volunteers at Hickory Tavern

Jean Swanson and **Ann Jenkins** are best friends. Like many iconic duos, they do everything together—including volunteer at Hickory Tavern Fire Department in Laurens County.

Fox Carolina recently spoke with Jean, Ann, and Hickory Tavern Chief **Lance Rope** about the pair's involvement with the department and community. [Watch the interview](#) on the Fox Carolina website.

Grant deadline



Application period for the 2023 CHEMTREC HELP Award are now open!

CHEMTREC & the National Volunteer Fire Council are partnering to award \$10,000 each to four volunteer fire departments in the U.S.

Submit your application by September 1st.

The graphic features a circular logo for the CHEMTREC HELP AWARD. The logo includes the CHEMTREC shield, the NVFC logo, and the text 'HAZMAT EMERGENCIES LOCAL PREPAREDNESS'. The background is yellow with a pattern of small fire hydrants.

Deadline to apply for CHEMTREC HELP award is Sept. 1

Our friends at **CHEMTREC** are assisting volunteer and combination departments to enhance their response capabilities and increase local preparedness to respond to and prepare for hazardous materials incidents by awarding four departments each a HELP award worth \$10,000.

For over 50 years, CHEMTREC's engagement with emergency responders around the world has been the engine that drives its success. Because of that, CHEMTREC has partnered with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) to award \$10,000 each to four volunteer or combination fire departments in the U.S. that are also members of the NVFC.

Applications are due **September 1**. [Submit your application](#).

Was this email forwarded to you? Subscribe to receive Rattle Watch every Thursday.



- [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
- January 18-21 - Fire Service Improvement Conference
- June 12-15, 2024 - Fire-Rescue



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

Westpark Boulevard 111, 29210, Columbia

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