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Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



Battalion Chief
Colby Means

Black History Month Spotlight: Battalion Chief Colby Means

City of Greer Battalion Chief **Colby Means** is a second-generation firefighter, following his dad step-by-step. It's a family affair for the Means, and Colby "never thought about anything else" when it came time to pick a career path.

His parents were born a month apart but in different areas of Spartanburg County. When they attended high school in the 1960s, his mom went to a segregated school while his dad didn't. He draws on their experiences to form his worldview, noting that everyone's experiences are different – *even if they're in the same county.*

"If [segregated schools] are hard for us to imagine, I hope that it's going to be really hard for my children to imagine," Colby said. His two young sons, ages four and six, are biracial, and Colby notes that their experiences will be different than his, just like his are different than the experiences of his parents.

Colby is the first Black Battalion Chief at Greer. His dad was the first Black firefighter hired at his department and every promotion, all the way up to chief, was a first. Like it often does, history repeated itself. Colby credits his dad, his mentors, and the pioneers that came before him that have made the position of Battalion Chief possible for a Black man.

“You’ve got to be willing and able to accept anybody in this profession and truly say and live by, ‘If someone can do this job, it doesn’t matter what they do in their personal life or their background,’” he said.

“If you have the mindset to do this job and you’re committed to it, the opportunities are endless.”



Association event



Legislative Day: Sign up to escort your legislator

Legislative Day is on **Wednesday, April 5, 2023**, on the grounds of the South Carolina State House under the big white tent between the Blatt and Gressette Buildings.

It can be intimidating to speak with Senators and House members, but our goal on Legislative Day is to make you *comfortable*, *knowledgeable*, and *eager* to talk with our lawmakers. Association staff will equip you with fire service related talking points before you request your legislator's presence at the luncheon.

Our legislative efforts continue to be successful because of the grassroots efforts of our members; Legislative Day is a celebration and recognition of those efforts and an opportunity to learn and grow together with lawmakers.

[Sign up to escort your legislator.](#)

Community event



Golf tournament to benefit Firefighter Cancer Support Network

The [Firefighter Cancer Support Network](#) (FCSN) is hosting its annual **Myrtle Beach Never Forgets Golf Tournament May 22-23, 2023** at Barefoot Resort and Golf Club.

Included in the action-packed tournament are opportunities to build camaraderie, bond with old friends, meet new ones and have some fun at a BBQ dinner and closing banquet.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the toolboxes FCSN sends to newly diagnosed firefighters, its one-of-a-kind Firefighters Guide to Cancer Survivorship handbook, and its cancer awareness and prevention education program delivered across the country.

[Register your team.](#)



Foundation scholarship application period is open

The **South Carolina Firefighters Foundation** sponsors five scholarships—the Chief Larry Williams Scholarship, the Sam Carbis Scholarship, the Chief Carter Jones Leadership Scholarship, the Chief Jim Stone Scholarship and the Chief Louis Behrens Scholarship—for members of the Association who are in good standing with their agency and the Association.

The annual scholarships are meant to help ease the financial burden of South Carolina firefighters who are either *joining the fire service or improving their skillset*.

[Apply for a Foundation scholarship.](#)

News from the State House



Legislative Day agenda summary

Year in and year out, 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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- [February 13 - 1% Regional Training, Orangeburg County](#)
- 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](#)



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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