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Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.

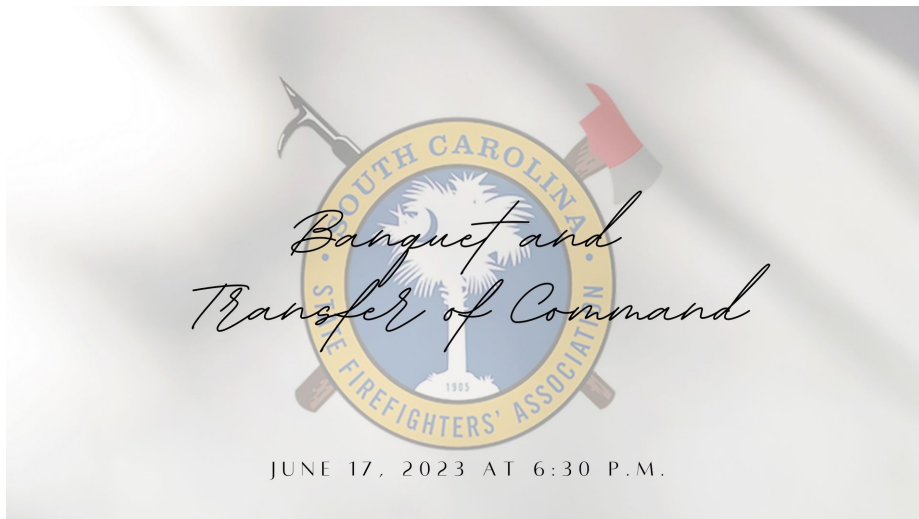


Study reclassifies firefighting as Group 1 hazard

A recent International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) study has reclassified firefighting to the highest hazard category: Group 1, “carcinogenic to humans.” A previous study from 2007 classified firefighting as Group 2B, “possibly carcinogenic to humans.” The new Group 1 classification applies to men and women, career and volunteer personnel, and both structural and wildland firefighting occupations. Read [why this reclassification is significant](#).

As a reminder, the [South Carolina Firefighter Cancer Health Care Benefit Plan](#) went into effect July 1, 2021. The legislature appropriated funding in the FY 2021-2022 budget for State Fire to purchase an insurance policy to provide the benefits defined in the statute. After a competitive bidding process, managed by the South Carolina Division of Procurement Services, the contract for the insurance policy was awarded to AXIS Insurance Company. AXIS will be utilizing Provident Agency, Inc., for claims management and processing and the South Carolina Firefighters Insurance Services for local claims assistance.

Association event



Join us at the Banquet during Fire-Rescue

Our **Banquet & Transfer of Command Ceremony** is the official conclusion of [Fire-Rescue](#) on the evening of June 17 at 6:30 p.m. Please join us as we recognize award winners and swear in incoming officers. Tickets are required and are \$35. [Get yours.](#)



Women's History Month spotlight: Jennifer Thackston

It's easy to default to 'firefighter' when thinking about occupations and opportunities in the fire service. Clemson University Fire & EMS Sergeant **Jennifer Thackston** proves there's more than one way to contribute to a department and community.

"There's so many pieces that support firefighting and there is a place for everyone," Jennifer said.

Growing up, Jennifer wanted to be a teacher. A native of Conway and graduate of Carolina Forest High School, she was active in the National FFA Organization that prepares students for careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture.

She was a freshman at Clemson in 2004 and started dating her husband, Jim, a year later, who was volunteering at a nearby department. Jennifer had no prior interaction or experience with emergency services, but it piqued her curiosity, and she enrolled in 1152.

Soon after, she befriended a fellow Clemson student from up north who

explained to her how fire departments in their area were also involved in rescue and EMS. She got in touch with the local rescue squad who suggested EMT school.

Jennifer and Jim attended night school after class at Clemson to obtain their EMT. While she loved her EMT class in the evenings, her student teaching experience was not living up to her childhood dreams; all the while, she was doing a work-study with Clemson Fire assisting the admin assistant, getting more and more familiar with the fire service. She decided to put her teaching dreams aside and take advantage of her EMT after graduating in 2007.

AEMT followed her EMT certification, followed by paramedic, followed by an EMT teaching gig. All told, Jennifer has 10 years of experience as a medic, and has Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and Fire Officer III under her belt.

She stayed in the area and joined Clemson part-time in 2011. In 2016, Clemson Student Government funded installation of trauma kits across campus. Collaborating with law enforcement, Jennifer oversaw the project and helped departments with the AED procurement process. Her ambiguous position transformed into a program coordinator, handling the likes of patient care and data analytics because of her EMT background.

When Chief **Rick Cramer** came to the department in 2021, he officially moved her to a Community Risk Reduction role and recently tagged her to lead the charge in the accreditation process.

“I would’ve never thought in a million years that I would want to go from being a schoolteacher to being in the fire service, let alone being an officer in the fire service because those pathways of data analytics and strategic planning and those types of pieces, those weren’t visible,” Jennifer continued. “I didn’t know they existed so I never could’ve imagined myself being there.”

Jennifer sits on the Association’s **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee**, and is excited about the opportunity to contribute to moving the fire service forward.

“I was proud and surprised because at that point I had not really made a name for myself in the fire service,” she said when she recalled how she felt when she was asked to serve on the committee.

“My hopes are that we continue down this path of being more inclusive and finding ways to encourage people to grow beyond where they think they can.”



David Bullard receives David Lee Crenshaw Leadership Award from OA Class 23-01

The David Lee Crenshaw “Big Dummy” Leadership Award was established by the inaugural class of the Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer in May 2022. Columbia County (GA) Lt. David Bullard was named the recipient of the award from OA class 23-01 at the conclusion of the program in March.

David Lee Crenshaw, affectionally known as “Big Dummy,” served the greater Anderson community as a firefighter and law enforcement officer for most of his career. On January 9, 2012, David died serving the citizens he loved when he collapsed on the scene of a motor-vehicle collision. He was 63.

OA class 22-01 created the David Lee Crenshaw “Big Dummy” Leadership Award to be presented to a student of the South Carolina State Firefighters’ Association Fire Officer Academy who is selected by their peers within the class for displaying exemplary skill, attitude, and leadership throughout the class.

“To my surprise, our class spokesperson announced that I had been selected and acknowledged me as ‘class dad,’” David wrote in a Facebook post.

Class 22-01 presented Clemson University Fire & EMS Capt. Ben Crenshaw, son of David Lee Crenshaw, with the award at the conclusion of last year’s program.

“It is an honor to receive this, following in the footsteps of David's son Ben Crenshaw,” David concluded.



Community events



Date change for annual Light the Night event

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has moved its Light the Night from October to May. In 2017, NFFF created Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters to recognize the 25th anniversary of the NFFF and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. In the years since, Light the Night has expanded and includes fire departments and families lighting their homes in red.

[Plan your tribute and get involved.](#)

*As dusk turns to dark, landmarks, homes, fire service organizations, and businesses across the country will again glow in respect from **May 4-7, 2023**, to the fallen and their families.*



Greenville City hosting Firefighter Training Program

Greenville City Fire Department is offering rising high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to become certified firefighters in eight weeks at no cost.

The annual [Firefighter Training Camp](#) is held from June-August at the GCFD Training Facility. Classes are Monday-Friday, 8-4:30 p.m. and lunch is provided.

The training camp covers all aspects of firefighting, CPR and first aid, incident command, hazardous materials operations, and auto extrication.

GCFD also provides ride-alongs with crews and mock interviews with area fire chiefs to help prepare the students to enter the job market.

Students who complete the program receive an IFSAC (International Fire Service Accreditation Congress) certification for Firefighter I and Firefighter II, which means they are eligible to apply for employment with Greenville City or other fire agencies.

Deadline to [apply](#) is April 29.

Please contact Division Chief [David Hindman](#) at 864-467-6637 with questions.

Correction

Last week's edition of Rattle Watch included a note on the upcoming "Sound the Alarm" fire alarm installation blitz in Spartanburg County, April 17-24, with a heavy need for volunteers on **Saturday, April 22**. The date listed in the newsletter last week incorrectly said **Saturday, March 22**.

Please contact Chief [Josh Fulbright](#) (803-728-5074) no later than April 12 if you would like to participate in the blitz on Saturday, April 22.

News from the State House



Legislative Update

Each week when the legislature is in session, Association lobbyists Stewart, Konduros, and Associates provide an update on legislation that impacts the fire service. All Legislative Updates for current session are posted on our [website](#).

Today we're looking at the House of Representatives Budget.

- \$3 million 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; **Funded by the House with recurring dollars.**

We hope to see you on Wednesday, April 5 at the State House for [Legislative Day](#).

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



- [April 5 - Legislative Day](#)
- [April 20 - 1% Regional Training Class: Berkeley County](#)
- [May 16 + 17 - Cleveland School Fire Remembrance](#)
- [June 14 - Foundation Golf Tournament](#)
- [June 14-17 - Fire-Rescue](#)
- [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](#)



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association

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