



News Release

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts, Ed.D.

PUBLIC SAFETY

DIVISION

www.lexingtonsheriff.com

24-hour Press Box
799-2001, Ext. 1100
Release # 07-02-060

Contact: Major John Allard
PIO Office & 24-hour messages
Phone: (803)785-2415
E-MAIL: [jallard@lex-](mailto:jallard@lex-co.com)

[co.com](http://www.lex-co.com)

Wednesday, February 21, 2007
1:45 p.m. (For immediate release)

FIRE SERVICE AWARDS BANQUET

The Lexington County Fire Service presented 69 awards to firefighters and citizens during the agency's annual awards banquet, which was held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20 at the Lexington Municipal Conference Center in the town of Lexington.

Lexington County Assistant Sheriff for Public Safety Bruce E. Rucker said about 200 people attended the awards banquet to show their support for the 116 full-time paid Fire Service employees and about 280 paid on-call firefighters who work for the Fire Service, which was created in 1975. The Fire Service provides fire protection and fire suppression services to citizens in unincorporated areas in Lexington County.

"Firefighters belong to a brotherhood of believers. We believe in each other. We believe we can make life better for citizens in Lexington County," Rucker said. "We conduct our business of firefighting whenever or wherever the fire call might be."

Lexington County Council Chairman William C. "Billy" Derrick thanked firefighters and their families for their dedication in providing fire protection and fire suppression services in a fast-growing county. Derrick said County Council's decision to build three new fire stations reflects its continuing commitment to enhance services provided by the Fire Service.

"County Council is very fond of the Fire Service. When things go badly, people look to you for help," Derrick said. "Thank you for what you do. May God bless and protect you."

Lexington County Fire Service Coordinator Russell Rawl thanked firefighters for their professionalism and dedication in enhancing fire protection and fire suppression services in a fast-growing county. Rawl also thanked County Council for its support of the Fire Service.

MORE....MORE....MORE

“I want to thank each of you for your dedicated service and thank your families for their support,” Rawl said. “Our Fire Service has a bright future.”

Terry Keisler, who serves as a paid, on-call firefighter at the Round Hill Fire Station, received the Jeffrey V. Chavis Firefighter of the Year Award for 2006, Rucker said. Keisler always is available to assist full-time firefighters in fighting fires.

“Terry exemplifies the traits of courage and dedication that define excellent firefighters,” Rucker said. “He sets a great example for his fellow firefighters.”

Chad Wessinger, who serves as a paid full-time captain at the Oak Grove Fire Station, received the Stanley W. Holcombe Fire Officer of the Year Award for 2006, Rucker said. Wessinger’s father, Nolan, serves as a paid, full-time firefighter with the Fire Service, and Wessinger grew up with the dream of following in his father’s footsteps.

Wessinger became a junior firefighter at age 15, a paid, on-call firefighter at age 18 and a paid, full-time firefighter in March 1993, Rucker said. Wessinger was promoted to the rank of captain in 2001.

“Chad displays great leadership skills,” Rucker said. “Chad is well-liked and well-respected by the firefighters who work for him.”

Rucker said these additional awards for 2006 were presented during the banquet:

Citizenship Award: Donnie Crout, Gilbert.

Robert D. Harmon Meritorious Action Award: Mark Lybrand, Lexington.

Frank D. Ballentine Instructor/Training Officer of the Year: Toby Taylor, Hollow Creek.

Five-Year Service Award: Elton Poole, Mack Edisto; Keith Shumpert, Lexington; John Smaltz, Fairview; Melissa Drafts, Swansea; Adrian Robinson, Sandy Run; Tracy Taylor, Sandy Run; Brian Hamm, Sandy Run; Cassandra Hutchens, Pine Grove; Harvey Owen, Pine Grove; David Zeigler, Pine Grove; James Cox, Amicks Ferry; Brent Shumpert, Red Bank; David Summer; Samaria; Charles Orrey, Samaria; Bradley Lybrand, Oak Grove; Justin Thames, Lexington; and John Sharpe, Round Hill.

10-Year Service Award: James Gunter, Hollow Creek; Kevin Barefoot, Boiling Springs; William Dorroh, Lexington; Todd Sharpe, Lexington; Jason Fulmer, Chapin; Richard Wymer, Chapin; Thomas Quattlebaum, Samaria; Matthew Kester, Round Hill; Charles Gunter, South Congaree; Clifton Hayes, Swansea; Danny Hunter, Edmund; Bruce Brazell, Mack Edisto; Robert Rich, Red Bank; and Corey Coleman, Oak Grove.

MORE....MORE....MORE

15-Year Service Award: Tim Kyzer, Boiling Springs; John Edrington, Lexington; Jeffrey Marthers, Sr., Fairview; Todd Black, Fairview; Alan Shumpert, Fairview; Marion Wise, Swansea; Sheila Busby, Pine Grove; Todd Goff, Pine Grove; Chad Harmon, Round Hill; Dean Leach, Pine Grove; John Frick, Amicks Ferry; Steven Suber, Amicks Ferry; and Jimmy Pendleton, Round Hill.

20-Year Service Award: Robert Cameron, Oak Grove; Kevin Clamp, Pelion; Tony Sharpe, Round Hill; Stan Matthews, Crossroads; James Lindler, Crossroads; Franklin Amick, Crossroads; Danny Hoover, Hollow Creek; Chris Pressley, Gilbert; Conrad Cooper, Oak Grove; Ricky Rawl, Lexington; David Connelly, Chapin; Tommy Derrick, Chapin; Charles Harmon, Lake Murray; and Danny Cooper, Oak Grove.

25-Year Service Award: Michael Rawl, Headquarters; Larry Barefoot, Boiling Springs; Dennis Padgett, Fairview; Robert Harmon, Lake Murray; Robert Cromer, Pine Grove.

30-Year Service Award: Billy G. Griffin, Crossroads.

Rucker said the following 10 businesses contributed door prizes for the banquet: Herndon Chevrolet, Ben Satcher Motors, Depot Building Supply, Tractor Supply, Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative, Barnes Jewelers, Slagle's Fire Equipment, Fatz Café, Stephano's Restaurant and Parker's of Lexington.
