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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 80

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 7, 2014

*Commending Thomas O. Lewis, Jr.*

Patrons—Ransone; Senator: Stuart

WHEREAS, Thomas O. Lewis, Jr., a Kinsale resident who diligently protected the community as a firefighter for over 40 years, retired as the chief of the Cople District Volunteer Fire Department in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Thomas "Tommy" Lewis was first elected as the chief of the Cople District Volunteer Fire Department (Cople District VFD) in 1981 and has served in that position for the majority of the past 32 years; and

WHEREAS, while working a full-time job throughout his tenure as fire chief, Tommy Lewis has ably presided over the business and operational functions of the Cople District VFD, an all-volunteer department that has never had more than 24 active firefighters, yet responds to over 400 calls per year; and

WHEREAS, under Tommy Lewis's strong, competent, and highly professional leadership, the capabilities of the department have grown to include not just firefighting, but responses to vehicle accidents, hazardous materials spills, and natural disasters; the department also provides emergency medical aid and patient transportation and can carry out marine and cold-weather rescue operations; and

WHEREAS, through visionary planning, Tommy Lewis has expanded the department's facilities and acquired the proper equipment to turn the department into a modern, highly technical response organization with the same capabilities as many full-time fire departments; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Lewis's extraordinary sense of professionalism is reflected in the fact that nearly all of the department's active members have been trained to the Fire Officer levels I and II and maintained those levels for the past decade; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Lewis has been a strong advocate for community spirit, leading the department to sponsor or co-sponsor with the Kinsale Foundation, a series of annual events like the popular Independence Day celebration, Kinsale Day, Christmas in Kinsale, and Easter egg hunts; the proceeds from some of these events are donated toward social programs that benefit the less fortunate citizens of the community; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tenure, Tommy Lewis was known as a master of collaborative leadership, and he always helped the other members of the department arrive at the correct decision on their own; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Lewis leaves an enduring legacy of professionalism, dedication, preparedness, and concern for the community to the younger members of the Cople District VFD; he is a role model for the future chiefs of the department; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Thomas O. Lewis, Jr., on the occasion of his retirement as chief of the Cople District Volunteer Fire Department in 2013; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Thomas O. Lewis, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his outstanding leadership, tireless dedication, and commitment to protecting the community.