

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 167

Commending the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2016
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 4, 2016

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue celebrates its 50th anniversary of protecting and serving the people and businesses of Prince William County; and

WHEREAS, during the organization's early years, an all-volunteer fire and rescue force served the community; in 1966, increasing population and development in Prince William County resulted in the creation of what would become a county-wide professionally staffed fire and rescue department; and

WHEREAS, the first person to be hired at the newly established Department of Fire and Rescue was Phil Ponder, a firefighter at the Dumfries-Triangle station; the first fire marshal was Selby Jacobs, who later became director of the department; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue has had many notable accomplishments; in 1967, the department introduced the first 911 emergency call system on the East Coast, setting a standard for other departments and localities to emulate; and

WHEREAS, the first emergency medical technicians were trained in 1973 and have since become a vital component of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue; in 1985, a Critical Incident Stress Management Program was established to help firefighters cope with difficult situations encountered in their work; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, at a time when the work of firefighters and first responders was traditionally done by men, Mary Beth Michos was named chief of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, becoming the first woman to head the department; and

WHEREAS, in the last 20 years, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue has grown and become more specialized; the county has a swift water and river boat rescue unit and a highly skilled technical rescue unit that specializes in structural collapse, trench, and rope rescues; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue operates a hazardous materials unit and conducts community safety programs; an Office of Emergency Management and a fire marshal's office help to safeguard the community; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue today has approximately 600 career staff and more than 1,000 volunteer members who help people in a variety of high- and low-risk emergencies; in 2015, the department responded to approximately 48,000 calls for service; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue have forged a strong alliance as they respond to requests for help, knowing that they may face dangerous and life-threatening emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue is committed to continuous quality improvement of its fire, emergency response, and emergency management services; the goal is to provide the strongest possible assistance to members of the community; and

WHEREAS, to help mark its 50th anniversary, the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue designed a special logo that commemorates the milestone; throughout 2016, a variety of events and programs will take place to celebrate five decades of service; and

WHEREAS, for half a century, the men and women of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue have steadfastly resolved to protect and serve, and they remain committed to the safety of the people of Prince William County; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 2016; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Kevin J. McGee, chief of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue, as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for the professionalism, skill, and bravery shown by the members of the department.

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