

2020 SESSION

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 65

Offered February 10, 2020

Commending the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department.

Patrons—Austin and Hurst

WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department of Botetourt County celebrated its 60th anniversary of service to the community in 2019; and

WHEREAS, founded by 22 charter members on September 21, 1959, the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated to address the area's need for efficient and effective fire protection services; and

WHEREAS, after obtaining property near U.S. Route 460 and State Route 616, where the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department continues to reside today, the charter members held meetings under a tent while raising funds for a fire station and equipment; and

WHEREAS, before acquiring a fire truck, members of the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department prepared by viewing training films and practicing with neighboring fire departments; in 1962, the department acquired its first truck, a used Oren pumper on a 1938 Chevrolet chassis; and

WHEREAS, since the early years, the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department's fleet has grown significantly and now includes two pumper trucks, a brush truck, a rescue truck, an air truck, and a response car; today, the department is staffed by approximately 20 active volunteers responding to an average of 150 emergency calls per year; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department has evolved over the years, implementing new technology to improve response time; initially relying on a telephone chain system, the department utilized an air horn and a radio tone Plectron system before adopting the current Enhanced 911 paging system; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, several chiefs have overseen the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department; the longest standing chief, Sam Smelser, Jr., served in the position from 1968 to 1998 and was given the title chief emeritus in honor of his leadership of the department through many changes and improvements; and

WHEREAS, the vision of local citizens over a half-century ago and the tireless dedication of numerous volunteers with the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department have contributed to making Botetourt and Bedford Counties and the City of Roanoke safer places for all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department hereby be commended on the occasion of its 60th anniversary of service to the community; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Mike Maddox, chief of the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department, as an expression of the House of Delegates' deep respect and heartfelt admiration for the department's contributions to Botetourt County and the Commonwealth.

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