



Charleston County News Release

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See Photo: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/awendaw.htm>

Awendaw Fire Department Receives \$1,500 from Wal-Mart

The Awendaw Fire Department received a \$1,500 check from Wal-Mart during the store's grand opening in Mt. Pleasant at the Market at Oakland (Highway 17 North at Porcher's Bluff Road).

The Awendaw Fire Department is the only fire department under direct responsibility of Charleston County Government.

"We are extremely grateful for this gift, and we will use it to help our citizens become even safer in their homes," said Mike Rakoske, Chief of the Awendaw Fire Department.

The department will use the money to purchase public safety and educational materials such as smoke detectors for the department's Smoke Detector Program and public educational materials to hand out at fire prevention events.

To be eligible to participate in the Smoke Detector Program, you must:

- Live within the Awendaw Fire District
- Contact the fire department by calling the administrative telephone number (843) 928-3294, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- Schedule a convenient time for the fire department to come by and install the free smoke detector.

"The Awendaw Fire Department has been proactive in seeking available funds used to improve safety for its firefighters and our citizens," said Jason Patno, director of Charleston County's Emergency Management Department, who oversees the Awendaw Fire Department.

Earlier this year, the Awendaw Fire Department received a \$16,275 online training grant that will enable the entire department to receive one year of online safety and risk management training at no cost.

Rakoske has been the Awendaw Fire Department's chief for four years, has served as interim chief for two years prior, and has been employed with Charleston County for 10 years overall.

SIDEBAR on the Awendaw Fire Department

- Charleston County created the Awendaw Fire Department on December 31, 1983. Initially, the department had one fire chief, three firefighters, one station and several volunteers, and handled between 200 and 300 calls per year.
- Current staffing is as follows:
 - 1 Fire Chief, Mike Rakoske
 - 3 Battalion Chiefs
 - 3 Lieutenants
 - 21 Firefighters/Engineers
 - 10 Volunteer Firefighters

- The current fleet of fire engines is less than 10 years old, ensuring good durability. Last year, the County purchased two new fire engines and one Quint, or ladder truck, which has a pump, hose bed, ground ladders, water tank, and ladder capability.
- The department is a first responding unit for the U.S. Forestry Service for wild fire suppression when the fires are reported by the public.
- The Awendaw Consolidated Fire District was established in July 2005. This improved fire protection and operations, and expanded fire service to the South Santee and Germantown communities, which were previously served by a volunteer fire department.
- The Awendaw Fire District coverage starts near Venning Road in Mount Pleasant, continues north to the communities of Germantown and South Santee and stops at the South Santee River at the Charleston County line, about 265 square miles.
- The department contracts with the Town of Awendaw and the Town of McClellanville to provide service.
- A recent random inspection visit by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found that the department was in compliance with training requirements.
- For the County's Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007), the Awendaw Fire Department responded to 1,085 incidents:
 - 20 fires in structures/dwellings
 - 3 non-dwelling fires
 - 23 total building fires
 - 96 other fires including vehicles, brush and trash
 - 658 rescue/EMS calls
 - 54 false alarms
 - 7 assists to other agencies/departments
 - Five hazardous materials responses
 - 25 responses to other hazardous conditions
 - 217 service calls (install smoke detectors; burn permits; assist elderly in or out of home; etc.)

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- Written by Jennie Davis -