



## Charleston County News Release

Release Number: 3059

Date: Oct. 26, 2009

***Apply for the new Awendaw Fire Department firefighter positions online:***

<https://jobsweb.charlestoncounty.org/hronline/public/vacancylisting.aspx>

### **Awendaw Fire Department Receives Grant for Six New Firefighter Positions**

*Federal SAFER grant awards \$556,536 to fund additional rural firefighters*

The [Awendaw Fire Department](#), a division of Charleston County Government, has received a \$556,536 grant from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to fund six new firefighter positions.

"I am excited to be able add six full-time firefighters," said Awendaw Fire Department Chief Mike Rakoske. "The increased staffing levels will improve firefighter safety, increase operational capabilities and streamline operational cost."

The goal of the SAFER grant is to enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association and U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration by helping local fire departments to increase their staffing and deployment capabilities.

A study conducted in October 2002, identified the minimum number of firefighters required at a moderate-risk structure fire within the Awendaw Fire District to be 13. Currently, the department responds with an average of eight firefighters.

"The additional positions that will be provided for through the SAFER grant will greatly enhance the response capabilities of the Awendaw Fire Department, improving service quality to the residents of the district," said Jason Patno, Charleston County's Emergency Management Department Director who oversees the Awendaw Fire Department.

The SAFER grant assists the Awendaw Fire Department by paying a portion of the salaries for the new positions over a four-year period. The remainder of the funding for this period, as well as subsequent years, is expected to come from funding currently used for the cost associated with part-time employees as well as an increase in the Awendaw Fire District millage rate.

The Awendaw Fire Department provides fire and life safety services including: medical first response; rural search and rescue; vehicle extrication; wild land fire suppression; fire inspection; and public fire education services to the unincorporated areas of Charleston County north of Mount Pleasant. The department serves 365 square miles of suburban and rural properties, federal forest land and coastal areas. The department's direct service area includes the northern unincorporated areas of Charleston County, including the Venning Road, Six Mile, Seven Mile, 10 Mile, Hamlin, Ravens Run, Phillips, Copahee, Buck Hall, South Santee and Germantown communities; Boone Hall Plantation; and the towns of Awendaw and McClellanville.

Services are currently provided by 22 career firefighters and 10 volunteer members who operate out of six stations. All stations are under the command of a battalion chief and are divided into three working shifts (A, B and C). All career fire personnel are Charleston County employees.

**Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant**

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant is administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Administration.

For more information, visit the SAFER grant Web page at <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/safer/>.