Charlottesville Fire Department Receives Governor's Award for Outstanding Fire Department Response
written by Newspack Team | February 26, 2018

The Charlottesville Fire Department was awarded the Governor's Award for Outstanding Fire Department Response this past weekend at the annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Fire & Rescue Conference. The department is being recognized for its role in the planning, preparation, response, and recovery efforts related to the Unite the Right rally weekend in August 2017.

The Governor's Award is given to the fire department that demonstrates effective use of mutual aid, cooperation with other agencies, integration of multiple emergency system components, and effective interagency cooperation. The Charlottesville Fire Department was the lead agency in planning the fire and rescue response during the August 12th weekend.

The department more than doubled its staffing and deployment capabilities for the weekend of August 11-12, 2017 and coordinated with multiple fire, EMS, law enforcement, and emergency management agencies.

"There were a lot of things that didn't go well that weekend, but there were elements of our city's, our region's, and our state's response that did work well, and one of those was the fire and EMS response," said Charlottesville Fire Department Chief Andrew Baxter. "No single agency, no single jurisdiction, could ever hope to be successful in this type of environment without a high degree of collaboration and coordination."

The fire and EMS planning efforts required close coordination with the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad, Albemarle County Fire Rescue, the Charlottesville Police Department, the Virginia State Police, the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle Emergency Communications Center, the University of Virginia Health System, the Thomas Jefferson Health District, the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM).

In addition to coordinating local resources, the department effectively integrated multiple fire and EMS responders from across the Commonwealth into the Incident Action Plan.

"The state's mutual aid system for fire and EMS resources proved to be very successful for us that weekend. Everything we asked for, we received — fire trucks, ambulances, hazardous materials teams, incident management teams. Everything," added Baxter.

The following agencies responded to and assisted with the response and recovery efforts over the August 12th weekend through mutual aid requests made to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management:

Central Virginia All-Hazards Incident Management Team
National Capital Region Incident Management Team
Chesterfield County Fire Department
Hanover County Fire Department
Henrico County Division of Fire
Lexington Fire Department
Louisa Fire Department
Lynchburg Fire Department
Prince William County Fire Rescue
Richmond Fire Department
Roanoke City Fire Department
Rockingham Fire and HAZMAT
Stafford County Fire Rescue
Harrisonburg Rescue Squad
Western Albemarle Rescue Squad
Lake Monticello Rescue Squad
Scottsville Rescue Squad
Sterling Rescue Squad
American Red Cross – Shenandoah Virginia Chapter
Spotsylvania Volunteer Fire Department Canteen Unit