



# St. George Fire Protection District

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## TWENTY-THREE JOIN THE RANKS OF THE FIRE SERVICE

On the evening of May 31, 2016 the friends and family of 23 young men and women, joined numerous members of the fire service and interested citizens attending their graduation from the St. George, Prairieville and West Baton Rouge Fire Departments' 2016 Recruit Academy.

The ceremonies, held at Woodlawn Baptist Church, marked the culmination of five and a half months of academically and physically challenging training. The event opened with the presentation of the Colors by the SGFPD Honor Guard, accompanied by the Baton Rouge Pipes and Drums. Following the Invocation delivered by Rev. Lewis Richerson, Pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church, Recruit Meg Kling performed our National Anthem.

SGFPD Chief Administrative Officer Dustin Yates introduced special guest and the evening's keynote speaker, Congressman Garret Graves. Congressman Graves expressed his appreciation and admiration for those who have chosen a path of public service that places them in harm's way, protecting the public.

The Congressman recalled a visit to the St. George Admin and Training Facility in February where he got to observe some of the cadets' training. One of the things he remembered was how dark it was in the burn building as the cadets and training officers entered it. He recounted that he, as a parent, would endure peril to protect his children, but he had great respect for those who faced danger for perfect strangers.

Following the Congressman, Recruit Dakota Nickens delivered the Academy Address.

Fire Chiefs Gerard Tarleton of St. George, Mark Stewart of Prairieville and Kenny Hunts of West Baton Rouge Parish then presented the badges to their recruits. Completing the presentation was the first pinning of the badge upon their uniform by a person chosen by each recruit. They then walked across the stage and were presented their certificates by Congressman Graves.

Fire Chief Tarleton administered the Oath of Office followed by remarks in which he thanked the families of the newly sworn firefighters for the support each firefighter had needed and received to come to the decision to choose the fire service as their life's work. He also reminded those family members that their loved ones would continue to need their support throughout their careers. The Chief ended by asking the newly sworn firefighters to turn to face those assembled and presented them to the crowd.

To close the ceremonies, Benediction was offered by Rev. Ken Spivey, of Healing Place Church and Chaplain of the St. George Fire Department.

Those graduating and sworn into their respective departments were:

St. George Fire Protection District – Nathan Boudreaux, Joshua Cherry, Austin Ebarb, Austin Facciane, Jaylan Gerald, Steven Getscher, Margaret Kling, Aaron Kowal, Stephen Mitchell, Caleb Reynolds, Michael Ricks, Kevin Rolf, David Schaale, Mitchel Strother, and Terrell Stubbs.

Prairieville Fire Department – Chad Barber, Shawn Bourgeois, Mchael Esterly, Dakota Nickens, and Taylor Ware.

West Baton Rouge Fire Department – James Hartley, Nick Mayard and Trevor Morrow.