**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE FRIENDSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT IN ANDERSON COUNTY FOR THE VALUABLE PUBLIC SERVICE IT RENDERS TO ITS COMMUNITY EVERY DAY AND TO CONGRATULATE THE DEPARTMENT ON THE CELEBRATION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are pleased to learn that the Friendship Fire Department, organized in 1965, will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary later this year; and

Whereas, the Friendship Fire Department station house was constructed by dedicated community volunteers with the generous support of many donors from Belton, Honea Path, and the surrounding areas; and

Whereas, starting out with just nineteen members and three vehicles, the Friendship Fire Department now boasts thirty members who range in age from fifteen to eighty‑one; a service area that exceeds thirty‑nine square miles and two hundred homes; a new substation that opened in 2014; and a fleet of vehicles, which includes three pumper trucks, two brush trucks, a tanker truck, and one medical first responder unit; and

Whereas, the Friendship Fire Department answers more than two hundred fifty calls each year with missions that vary from fire suppression to medical first response and vehicle extrication operations; and

Whereas, the Friendship Fire Department is proud to be a vital member of the Anderson County Fire Department, which consists of twenty‑eight fire departments and more than eight hundred fifty volunteer firefighters, making it the third largest volunteer fire department in the United States; and

Whereas, the Friendship Fire Department has had only five fire chiefs in its fifty years of operation: Walt Acker, Jackie Bracken, Mike Gambrell, Brian Moon, and the current chief, Matthew Ashley; and

Whereas, the Friendship Fire Department is especially appreciative of its longest serving and charter member, the current secretary‑treasurer, Mr. Aaron Gambrell; and

Whereas, recognizing the great sacrifice that firefighters bring to the communities they serve, the members of the General Assembly take great pleasure in congratulating the Friendship Fire Department on fifty years of excellent service to the citizens of Anderson County. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Friendship Fire Department in Anderson County for the valuable public service it renders to its community every day and congratulate the department on the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Chief Matthew Ashley of the Friendship Fire Department.

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