**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE BEREA FIRE DISTRICT OF GREENVILLE COUNTY AND TO CONGRATULATE FIRE CHIEF GARY BROCK AND THE FIREFIGHTERS OF THE DISTRICT UPON THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THEIR NEIGHBORS AND THE CITIZENS OF BEREA.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is deeply grateful for the tradition of sacrificial service and excellence which firefighters and first responders across the State exhibit, like the career and volunteer firefighters of the Berea Public Service District, who ensure the safety of our citizens and their property; and

Whereas, as the Berea community grew in the early 1960s, local leaders discussed the need for organized fire protection, and the Berea Fire Department was formed in the summer of 1962 with fifteen to twenty volunteers and one American Lafrance pumper. Emmett Farr, Sr., served as Berea’s first fire chief; and

Whereas, the department’s first call to a fire occurred before an official location had been selected when firewood shavings in the back of a truck ignited. With no phone system in place, a call was made to Bolen’s feed store, and Chief Farr was contacted. Chief Farr went to Philpot’s Service Station where the fire truck was parked and drove it to the fire. He and several others successfully put out the fire; and

Whereas, the department’s organization and communication soon improved significantly when its first official location was selected near a building previously used by EMS on West Parker Road. In those early years, five homes in the area had fire phones with dedicated lines that residents could use to report fires, and a giant siren over the station sounded when the phone rang. Volunteers then reported to the station where they would find the location of the fire written on a chalkboard. Prior to moving into their West Parker Road location, the Berea Fire Department kept their firetruck under some trees and then at a filling station, evidencing how far the department has come from those early days; and

Whereas, today, sixty years later, the Berea Fire Department consists of thirty‑three fulltime employees and ten volunteers and has three locations serving an eighteen‑square‑mile area. The now Class 1 ISO fire department maintains eight trucks with fire‑fighting capacity along with two pick‑up trucks, a significant increase in both man power and capability since the foundation of this department; and

Whereas, in 2016, the Berea Fire Department painted an older truck pink, transforming it into an “On Fire For a Cure” special vehicle which bears the names of former and active firefighters diagnosed with cancer, as well as the names of family members battling the disease. The truck has made over one hundred visits to homes and cancer treatment centers and has participated in special events across the area, exemplifying the outstanding service that has earned the Berea Fire Department the admiration and gratitude of the community for over for six decades; and

Whereas, since Chief Farr, five chiefs have commanded the firefighters who protect and educate the community and all who enter the Berea District with courage, commitment, compassion, and integrity: Jimmy Smith, Tom Allen, John Coleman, Joe Best, and current chief, Gary Brock; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to celebrate the anniversary of sixty years of courageous service that the Berea Fire Department has given to the community, and the members look forward to the continued and meaningful service of Berea’s firefighters in the years to come. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Berea Fire District of Greenville County and congratulate Fire Chief Gary Brock and the firefighters of the district upon the sixtieth anniversary of outstanding service to their neighbors and the citizens of Berea.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Fire Chief Gary Brock.

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