

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 9, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT

Beth Reiss

Communications Director

beth.reiss@mid.ms.gov

601-359-2403

FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL ADDS NEW NAMES

By Mississippi Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney

Every October dozens of people gather at the Mississippi State Fire Academy (MSFA) to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty. There are 122 names on the Fallen Firefighter Memorial. The newest additions are Phillip Allan of the Magee/Seminary Volunteer Fire Department and Jesse Lee Hunter of Stampley Volunteer Fire Department. Their names are now etched in granite, in the shadow of pines – a reminder of the unending bravery and selfless service of those that protect us.

The memorial each year is moving. As the name of each fallen first responder is called, a bell is rung signaling the firefighter's last call. I hope that each time the thousands of firefighters across this state answer a call, they know they are not alone. We support them, love them, and we wait for them to come home. They take their duty and responsibility seriously and we appreciate their sacrifice.

These men and women are among the most elite individuals, putting service and duty above self. Each day, firefighters make the choice to step up and put themselves in harm's way to save others. Their service makes them heroes.

The National Fire Protection Association recognizes Fire Prevention Week 2023 from October 8-14. This year's Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW™) campaign is "Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention™." Unattended

cooking caused three fire deaths in Mississippi in 2022. That's down from nine cooking-related deaths in 2021.

A working smoke alarm cuts your risk of dying in a fire in half. The Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) has purchased nearly 45,000 smoke alarms this year using about \$500,000 in grant money through the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The alarms are being distributed to fire departments around the state. Each department will be responsible for distributing and installing them in their own communities. If you need a smoke alarm, ask your local fire department. Smoke alarms should be tested once a month, batteries should be replaced once a year, and the entire alarm should be replaced every 10 years.

Make an escape plan that includes two ways out of your home and practice the escape plan often. Make sure that children and those who may need extra assistance have someone to help them escape. Set a location away from the home for everyone to meet in case of a fire. Call 911 once you're out of the house and don't go back in for any reason.

While we are grateful for the protection that firefighters offer, let's do our part to prevent fires. Check your home for fire dangers, install smoke alarms, and make an escape plan. Let's keep ourselves and our hero first responders safe.

###