



For Immediate Release

March 28, 2011

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media Department @ 803.545.3020

Columbia-Richland Fire Department Receives \$396,080 *Landmark grant to bolster volunteer recruitment and retention*

COLUMBIA, SC - Officials from the City of Columbia and Richland County joined Fire Chief Aubrey Jenkins today for a joint press conference to announce news that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded a Columbia-Richland Fire Department a 2010 SAFER Grant in the amount of \$396,080.

These highly sought after funds will be used to increase the number of volunteer firefighters within the Columbia-Richland Fire Department by hiring a full time Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, developing a department-wide Volunteer Improvement Program (VIP), as well as developing and executing a marketing plan aimed at recruiting more volunteer firefighters.

"Volunteer Firefighters are a critical part of our Unified Fire Service," said Chief Jenkins. "By expanding and improving our volunteer capacity, we can increase our ability to respond to emergencies quickly and effectively throughout the city and county."

The Columbia-Richland Fire Department's \$396,080 award is the largest of only six 2010 SAFER Grants received in South Carolina. Other South Carolina departments who received grants include the Buffalo Volunteer Fire Department, Horry County Fire/Rescue, the Lee County Fire Department, the Palmetto Rural Fire Department, and the Williamsburg County Fire Department.

"Between the City of Columbia and Richland County we have the largest city and second largest county in the state," Mayor Steve Benjamin said. "This grant helps us make sure we are also the safest."

"This partnership highlights Richland County's continued commitment to providing residents with optimal services and public safety," said Richland County Chairman Paul Livingston. "It is our sincere hope, that through the SAFER grant the Columbia-Richland Fire Department will be able to further enhance the level of protection and security to our citizens."

To learn more about SAFER Grants or view the full list of grant recipients, visit www.firegrantsupport.com/content/html/safer/Awards10.aspx.

#####