

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2011

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS CONGRATULATE THE FIRST GRADUATES OF ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE POLICE ACADEMY'S "BASIC FIREFIGHTING I" COURSE

(Newark, NJ) – Members of the first graduating class of Essex County College Police Academy's inaugural "Basic Firefighter I" course were honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders during their Wednesday, October 12th, meeting held at Maplewood Town Hall.



Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano (far left) of West Caldwell presented the Freeholder Board's commendation to four members of the first class of volunteer firefighters to complete the inaugural "Basic Firefighter I" course offered by the Essex County College Police Academy: (l. to r., after Freeholder Luciano) David Eucker (Caldwell F.D.), Darren Sinclair (Caldwell F.D.), Darin Keepers (Cedar Grove F.D.) and Jared Hoholick (Caldwell F.D.). The presentation was made during the Board meeting held on Wednesday, October 12th, at Maplewood Town Hall. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

The Board's Commendation was sponsored by Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano of West Caldwell, who made the presentation to four representatives of the nine-member class, all of whom are currently serving as volunteer firefighters in their home towns. The class was comprised of: Benjamin Molina of the Bloomfield Fire Department; David Eucker, Jared Hoholick, Stephen Saldutto and Darren Sinclair of the Caldwell Fire Department; Darin Keepers and Zachary Lynch of the Cedar Grove Fire Department; Andrew Vogel of the Roseland Fire Department; and Christopher Scheper of the Verona Fire Department.

During his presentation to the graduates, Freeholder Luciano recounted his personal experiences when his own home was engulfed in flames on Memorial Day Weekend of 2008. "I've seen firefighters in action on television and in the movies many, many times", said Luciano, "but it's an entirely different story when you witness their skill and bravery in person, and especially when they're putting their own lives on the line to save *your* loved ones and *your* home." "I didn't think it was possible for me to have more respect for firefighters than I already had, but I do! On behalf of the entire Board, I want to thank you for your hard work, your determination to increase your training and knowledge, and for your courageous service to your communities."

The "Basic Firefighter I" course, a 16-week class that began in June, was focused on both classroom theory and hands-on drill sessions, during which students learned the basics of nationally-recognized firefighting and safety techniques, including the handling of blood-borne pathogens and awareness in handling hazardous materials. Upon completion of the class, the students are also required to take the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety standardized basic firefighting test.

Essex County College Police Academy, under the direction of Director Rocco Miscia, is proud to have offered this first course in firefighting, especially in light of the fact that until now, Essex County was one of only two counties in New Jersey without a county-wide fire training facility. Additional firefighting courses are being scheduled and the second "Basic Firefighter I" class is already underway.

The Essex County Police Academy was acquired by Essex County College in 1998. With the introduction of these firefighting courses, the scope of the Police Academy has been expanded beyond being strictly a police and law enforcement security training facility. Essex County College is led by Dr. Edythe M. Abudullah, President.

A Graduation Ceremony for the graduates was held on September 8, 2011, at the Essex County College Police Academy in Cedar Grove.

Essex County College President Dr. Edythe M. Abdullah and Lt. Michael Tomich, the Fire & EMS Training Coordinator at the Police Academy (who represented Director Rocco Miscia) also attended the meeting and assisted Freeholder Luciano in the presentation to the graduates.

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