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North Myrtle Beach Public Safety Department Receives Wildland Firefighting Gear Grant



L-R: Red Card Certified Wildland Firefighters Darrin Jacques, Brad Infante, Zack Callihan, Aaron Asbury, James Vreeland, Mike Davis

North Myrtle Beach, S.C. – The North Myrtle Beach Public Safety Department recently received a \$3,500 South Carolina Forestry Commission grant to assist in the purchase of \$7,000 worth of wildland firefighting gear for the department's six red card certified wildland firefighters. The firefighters, trained by the S.C. Forestry Commission, are certified to help fight wildfires anywhere in the United States.

With the help of the grant, the department purchased six sets of brush pants, brush shirts, wildfire helmets, wildland shrouds, wildland goggles, flashpoint boots, day packs, fire shelters,

water reservoirs, wildland gloves, incident response pocket guides, travel bags for wildland firefighting gear and radio harnesses.

While all North Myrtle Beach firefighters have completed the classroom portion of the South Carolina Forestry Commission's wildland firefighting classes and practical field exercise, six firefighters volunteered to continue on to earn their red cards. This means they completed the physical test, which is comprised of completing a three mile trek in a walking-only format carrying a 45 pound weight within 45 minutes. After passing the physical portion of the test, the red card candidates completed a four hour class on wildland firefighting safety and emergency shelter deployment. They then had to demonstrate that they

can deploy and enter a fire shelter. A fire shelter is a small tent made of aluminum and other fire and heat resistant materials that all wildland firefighters carry while working on a fire line. In the event of a wildland fire overrunning firefighters, they deploy the tent-like shelter, enter it, and remain inside until the firestorm passed.

North Myrtle Beach is the first municipality in South Carolina to have graduated red card certified personnel from the S.C. Forestry Commission's wildland firefighting training program. Traditionally, only county fire departments pursue wildland firefighting red card certification for their personnel because county jurisdictions include large amounts of undeveloped land or wildlands. However, following the Horry County wildfires that impacted homes located in Barefoot Resort & Golf, the North Myrtle Beach Public Safety Department sought volunteers among its firefighters to pursue red card certification in order to enhance the department's direct control and response when an out-of-jurisdiction wildfire threatens properties within the North Myrtle Beach city limits.

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