



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort Fire Chief to retire mid-January

Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Chief Sammy Negron will retire Jan. 15, ending his 20-year firefighting career in the Lowcountry.

Negron said he is retiring to dedicate time to his family as he fights Multiple Sclerosis, which he was diagnosed with in 2005. He will continue to be a member of the team as a fire consultant to the city, Beaufort City Manager Bill Prokop said.

Negron, named Fire Chief in March 2010, originally joined the Beaufort Fire Department in 1999 as a Firefighter Recruit. Before that, he served 12 years in the U.S. Marine Corps with service supporting Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and military involvement in Somalia, and he served in Bosnia. He was honorably discharged from the Marines after being injured in a training incident.

“I love firefighting and I love our brotherhood of firefighters,” Negron said. “This has not been an easy decision, but it is the right decision. I will continue to support the City of Beaufort and the Fire Department because there is so much happening, so much good stuff to make Beaufort a better and safer community.”

He served four years as a Beaufort firefighter recruit volunteer before joining the professional force.

As he nears retirement, Beaufort is in the final stages of building a new fire station at 1120 Ribaut Road which is a tribute to him for his hard work and dedication to the public safety needs of the community. The new facility will replace the aging and outdated fire station located beside Beaufort Middle School and across from Mossy Oaks Elementary School.

“Chief Negron has been such an important part of not just our fire department, but our whole city,” Prokop said. “When we needed volunteers, Sammy has always been at the front of the line. He’s been involved in making the fire department more professional and efficient, he will be missed.

“We are in total support of his decision to spend more time with his family and fight this MS disease that affects thousands of families every year,” Prokop said. “He will still and always be a member of

our City family, and we have the utmost respect and admiration for him. He has been an inspiration to all of us.”

Key accomplishments under Negron’s command include:

- Working with the Town of Port Royal to establish a centralized fire department
- Improving the ISO fire insurance rating for Port Royal, and strengthening Beaufort’s
- Reorganizing the fire department to improve efficiency, expertise and service
- Changing the types of fire trucks and other apparatus so the Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Department has the right types of equipment to respond to calls across northern Beaufort County
- Working cooperatively with the Burton and Lady’s Island-St. Helena Island Fire District to establish automatic aid agreements
- Participated in a study of the Beaufort Fire Department in 2009-2010 by the International City/County Management Association. Findings from that study shaped his reorganization of the department upon being named Fire Chief in early 2010.
- Recruited and built a very strong organization.

“Our fire chief is a good man,” Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling said. “Along with that, he’s also an exceptional fire chief, a well-respected leader, a very good department manager, and an important part of this community. We wish him all the best.”

Port Royal Mayor Samuel Murray said Negron will be missed. "Chief Negron never stops working as a firefighter," Murray said. "He has raised the bar for what we all expect in a fire chief. He was very important in the work it took to improve the Town of Port Royal's insurance fire rating and in the efforts to get the new Ribaut Road fire station built."

Negron was born and raised in the City of Ponce located in the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. After serving two years of National Guard Duty in Puerto Rico, in 1987 he joined the United States Marine Corps and attended boot camp at Parris Island.

He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland and earned an Associate of Applied Science in Fire Science and a Bachelors of Science in Fire Science cum laude.

In 1998, Negron was named Volunteer Firefighter of the Year for Beaufort, and he repeated that honor in 2006 as the Career Firefighter of the Year. In 2003 he earned the Firehouse Magazine Medal for Valor and Courage and the U.S. Congressional Fire Service Institute Award for Dedication and Valor.

He holds a Bachelor’s degree in fire science and is accredited by numerous firefighting agencies, including the National Fire Protection Association, the International Code Council and the International Fire Service Accrediting Council.

Chief Negron is married to Nina Negron and together they are the proud parents of one daughter and two sons and a granddaughter.

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