

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 812

Commending Michael A. Neal.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates July 18, 2024

WHEREAS, Michael A. Neal, a distinguished member of Ringgold Volunteer Fire and Rescue who has served the community as a firefighter for more than 54 years, retired as chief of the department in 2024; and

WHEREAS, Michael "Mike" A. Neal joined Ringgold Volunteer Fire and Rescue, then known as the Ringgold Volunteer Fire Department, at the age of 16, following in the footsteps of his father, A. Calvin Neal, who helped establish the department in 1958 and served as its original chief; and

WHEREAS, after he turned 18, Mike Neal was elected as assistant chief and placed on the Ringgold Volunteer Fire Department's board of directors, where he has served the members of the department ever since; and

WHEREAS, Mike Neal ably carried out his duties as assistant chief for 19 years, then was elected as chief in 1991; under his leadership, the department has responded to increasing demands for service, answering as many as 1,400 calls per year; and

WHEREAS, Mike Neal has witnessed significant growth and change in both Pittsylvania County and in the firefighting profession; the Ringgold Volunteer Fire Department was originally made up of three stations in Ringgold, Kentuck, and Keeling, all of which have now become separate departments to better serve the growing community, and he presided over the adoption of the name Ringgold Volunteer Fire and Rescue after the department began offering ambulance service; and

WHEREAS, during Mike Neal's long tenure with the department, the price of a new firefighting apparatus has increased from approximately \$20,000 to as much as \$1 million, and he has worked diligently to ensure that his firefighters have the best possible equipment and training while maintaining the fiscal stability of the department; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his legacy of service as a volunteer firefighter, Mike Neal pursued a long and successful career with the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company for more than 42 years, working in quality control supervision, payroll, and upper management between 1974 and 2016; and

WHEREAS, Mike Neal has also volunteered his wise leadership to the board of the Pittsylvania County Sports Hall of Fame, the Dan River Community Ruritan Club, and the Pittsylvania County Fire and Rescue Association; and

WHEREAS, after his well-earned retirement as chief, Mike Neal looks forward to spending more time with his beloved family, and he will continue to respond to calls for service and guide Ringgold Volunteer Fire and Rescue as a member of its board of directors, ensuring a smooth leadership transition and upholding the department's reputation for excellence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Michael A. Neal hereby be commended on the occasion of his retirement as chief of Ringgold Volunteer Fire and Rescue; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Michael A. Neal as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his legacy of service to the Ringgold community.

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