



New Fire Captain and Training Lieutenant Named

Oakland and Welch Promoted to Captain and Training Lieutenant Respectively

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-March 2, 2021-Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue (SSFR) announced two promotions within its officer ranks promoting Joe Oakland to Captain and Chris Welch to Training Lieutenant.

“Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue is comprised of a talented and dedicated group of individuals who truly love this community,” said Fire Chief Chuck Cerasoli. “Not many departments would be able to pull from within for open positions, especially in the officer level, and shows the depth of the experience and knowledge we have internally.”

Joe Oakland takes over as Captain from his previous position as Training Lieutenant. Oakland has been with SSFR for the past 15 years, first as a Firefighter/EMT before moving to Firefighter/Paramedic. He most recently served as Training Lieutenant over the past year.



Over his tenure, Oakland has been responsible for implementation for several digital integration projects including Records Management Systems, Combined Emergency Response Team Medic, Spillman CAD mobile, Wall & Computer Mapping and Ambulance Design and Ordering. Outside the department, Oakland serves as an Adjunct EMS Professor at Colorado Mountain College in Steamboat Springs since 2019 and for the past 15 years as a ski patroller for the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp. He holds several state and federal certifications, attended Metropolitan State University, and recently enrolled for Colorado State University’s Fire & Emergency Service Administration program.

As Captain, Oakland will be responsible and oversee daily operations for Shift C, comprised of an eight-person firefighting/paramedic crew across multiple stations. During an emergency, the Fire Captain is responsible for initial incident command and may remain in that role until the abatement of the emergency. He joins Captains Arce and Hetrick in leading Fire/EMS response, suppression, and education.



In his new role, newly named Training Lieutenant Chris Welch will manage training programs across the department to meet state and national standards, annual certifications as well as specialized skill development including chemical and hazardous spills, vehicle extraction and large-scale incident management integration. In addition, he is responsible for the yearly fire training academy and providing technical review for department policies and procedures.

Welch first joined Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue in 2008 as a firefighter/EMT, before moving to engineer and then obtaining his paramedic accreditation. Welch holds numerous certifications from the state and federal level including Swiftwater rescue, hazardous materials, technical rigging rescue, wildland fire and portable pumps and water use. In addition, he had attended the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland for Command and Control for Incident Operations and Multiple Alarm Incidents. A graduate of the University of Idaho with a Bachelor of Science in Professional Technical and Technology Education, he also serves on the Board of Directors for a local non-profit.

“Captain Oakland and Lieutenant Welch will be valuable assets to the department; and, more importantly, to the entire community. I look forward to their contributions in these new roles and helping lead our team forward,” continue Chief Cerasoli.

SSFR serves the city and surrounding Steamboat Springs Area Fire Protection District, a 387-square-mile area with an estimated base population of 20,000 people with upwards of 35,000 people with visitors. It is the only paramedic level service in Routt County and provides paramedic level services when requested by other fire agencies in the county through mutual aid agreements.

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