



JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.
MAYOR

City of Charleston
South Carolina

BARBARA W. VAUGHN
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Mayor Riley Announces New Chief of the City of Charleston Fire Department

Charleston, S.C. Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. announced today the selection of a new Chief of the City of Charleston Fire Department. She is Karen E. Brack, currently serving as Deputy Chief of the Eugene, Oregon Fire and EMS Department. She will replace Frank Finley, who has served as Charleston's Interim Chief since March 1, when Chief Emeritus Thomas Carr retired.

Chief Brack has 30 years of experience in the fire service. Currently, her responsibilities include being in charge of all field operations of the Eugene, Oregon Fire and EMS Departments. A native of Savannah, Georgia, Chief Brack began her career in the fire service with the Fulton County, Georgia Fire Department in 1982 and moved up the ranks, becoming a battalion chief in 2001. In 2007, she was selected to become Deputy Chief in Eugene, Oregon. In 2010, she assumed simultaneous responsibility for the neighboring Springfield, Oregon Fire and Life Safety Department, as the Eugene and Springfield departments pursue a merger. Chief Brack is currently enrolled in the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, she holds a BS in Biology, AAS in both Fire Science and Paramedic Technology.

Mayor Riley selected Chief Brack from among 61 candidates who applied for the position of Chief of the Charleston Fire Department.

Riley said, "We received applications from a group of outstanding fire service professionals. The very difficult job of reviewing these applications produced four candidates who came to Charleston. I had the chance to interview each one and they also met with City Council, members of the Fire Department and City staff. Each of the four finalists would be excellent fire chiefs for the City of Charleston. I was extremely impressed with each of them, their experience and ability. The City of Charleston was given the opportunity to choose the best of a very fine group of candidates."

He continued, "Karen Brack was the best choice. She possesses leadership ability and experience that will be extremely valuable to our Fire Department and to our community in the coming years. In speaking with her current co-workers and those with whom she worked in Georgia, hearing their comments about her, qualities and style of leadership, her extraordinary work ethic, her professionalism and character was so impressive and reinforcing of the impressions I gained through my interviews with her."

Brack said, "It is a great honor to be selected as Chief of the City of Charleston Fire Department. Charleston is well known as a wonderful city and I have been very impressed with its strong fire service team. I am committed to continuing the record of progress set by Chief Carr and continued by Chief Finley. I am eager to begin leading the exceptional men and women of the City of Charleston Fire Department as we work together to make this great department even better and make the citizens of Charleston even safer."

While the search for a new Fire Chief was conducted, the City of Charleston Fire Department was led by Chief Frank Finley, a 31-year veteran of the department. Finley previously served as the Deputy Chief for Administration, and will continue to serve the department once Chief Brack takes charge as Chief. Mayor Riley said, "We owe a debt of gratitude to Chief Finley for his dedication and service to this city as interim chief. He has done an outstanding job leading the department since Chief Carr's retirement, and I know Chief Brack will find his knowledge, experience and dedication to the department an invaluable asset in the years to come."

Chief Brack plans to begin her duties with the City of Charleston Fire Department on August 1, 2012. Charleston City Council will consider the recommendation of the appointment of Chief Karen Brack at its next regular meeting, on May 22, 2012.

FOR MORE INFO:

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