



# NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** County Executive Jen Metzger

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**\*\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*\***

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## **Ulster County Recognizes 62 Firefighters at Graduation Ceremony**

**KINGSTON, NY** - On Monday evening, July 28, Ulster County Fire Services held a graduation ceremony at SUNY New Paltz recognizing the achievements of 62 men and women who completed their basic firefighter training over the past year.

These individuals completed one of three Firefighter I training programs held in Ulster County over the last year: Class 24-3 in Fall 2024, Class 25-1 in early 2025, and the Class 25-2 Summer Program. Each class included the 129-hour curriculum composed of Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations (BEFO) and Interior Firefighter Operations (IFO), along with specialized instruction in CPR, firefighter self-rescue, the Incident Command System, and Ulster County's Flashover Fire Behavior Lab.

The Summer Program included additional courses in Engine Company Operations, Truck Company Operations, and Fire Service Cancer and Decontamination Awareness, giving graduates an even broader skillset.

The ceremony honored not only the graduates but also two heroic acts by first responders over the past year. Charlotte Bean, rescued from a Cragmoor house fire on Memorial Day weekend, shared her story and expressed heartfelt gratitude to Walker Valley Fire Chief Jim Greer, who saved her life and was presented with a plaque of recognition. Rosendale firefighter Adam Watson was also honored for rescuing a teenager with autism from the fast-moving Rondout Creek in August, when floodwaters from Tropical Storm Debby made conditions especially dangerous. Their swift, selfless actions saved lives and exemplified the courage and dedication of Ulster County's first responders.

“Our volunteer firefighters represent the very best of Ulster County — people who step forward with great courage, discipline, and professionalism to protect us and keep us safe,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “Completing this training is a major achievement, and these graduates have gone above and beyond, proving they’re ready to answer the call. I want to thank our Department of Emergency Services and our incredible instructors who prepare our firefighters with the knowledge and skills to be their very best in this life-saving work.”

“These graduates didn’t just meet a standard, many went well beyond it,” **said Everett Erichsen, Ulster County Department of Emergency Services Director.** “Some put in over 200 hours, pushing through exhaustion, frustration, and everything this job throws at you before you ever see a fire. What they’ve built isn’t just technical skill; it’s discipline, teamwork, and the mindset to serve when things are at their worst. They’ve earned the trust that comes with this work, and I’m proud to welcome them into the fire service.”

“This program is more than just a certification, it is a foundation of excellence, resilience, and teamwork. We are proud of each graduate for their commitment to training and to their communities,” **said Mike Gaffney, Ulster County Department of Emergency Services Deputy Director/Fire Coordinator.**

The graduates represented departments from Accord, Big Indian, Bloomington, Centerville, Cottekill, Ellenville, Esopus, Glasco, Highland, Hurley, Malden, Marlboro, Milton, Mohonk Fire Brigade, Napanoch, Olive, Pine Hill, Rifton, Rosendale, Sawkill, St. Remy, Stone Ridge, Ulster Hose, Wallkill, and Woodstock, as well as from departments in Dutchess, Delaware, and Tompkins Counties.

For more information on the Ulster County Emergency Services Volunteer Program, and becoming a volunteer, visit: <https://codev.ulstercountyny.gov/emergency-volunteer/>

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