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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inaugural Fire & Life Safety Awards Recognize Leadership in Risk Reduction at 10th Annual Fire & Life Safety Summit

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Sept. 10, 2026 — The Alabama Fire College presented its inaugural Fire & Life Safety Awards during the 10th Annual Fire & Life Safety Summit, held at the Alabama Fire College in Tuscaloosa. The Summit is sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association and State Farm Insurance.

The awards recognize individuals and organizations making significant contributions to fire prevention, public education, and community risk reduction across Alabama. Representatives from the Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia State Fire Marshal's Offices provided an independent peer review of the nominations.

Fire & Life Safety Educator Award: Captain Dan Pickens, Madison Fire and Rescue: Pickens was recognized for his exceptional commitment to fire and life safety education through school programs, smoke alarm installations, CPR training and community outreach. In 2025 alone, his efforts reached more than 5,000 children and supported dozens of classes, demonstrations, station tours and public events.

Chief Advocate for Prevention Award: Charlie Dixon, Thomasville Volunteer Fire Department: Dixon was honored for making prevention and public education an important part of his department's mission. Through school visits, hands-on safety programs and outreach throughout Thomasville and surrounding communities, he has helped strengthen the fire service's role as both emergency responder and prevention advocate.

Community Impact Awards: Cedar Hill Elementary School Principal Nona Adams; Shinbone Valley Fire & Rescue: Principal Nona Adams was recognized for turning tragedy into action following the loss of a Cedar Hill Elementary student in a house fire. She partnered with Ardmore Fire and Rescue to help provide working smoke alarms and home escape planning resources to school families, reaching more than 600 students and households. Shinbone Valley Fire & Rescue was honored for its extensive community education and prevention efforts despite having only 13 active volunteer members. Its programs include smoke alarm outreach, school safety education and the department's decade-long Kids Fire Prevention and Safety Camp.

Trailblazer Department Award: Irondale Fire Department: Irondale Fire Department was recognized for making prevention, education and continuous improvement part of its department-wide culture. Guided by its IRON values — Integrity, Respect, Ownership and Never-ending improvement — the department has expanded programs including Firefighter for the Day, the FIRE reading program, residential KnoxBox loans and smoke alarm initiatives.

The Alabama Fire College congratulates all of this year's recipients and nominees for their leadership, service and commitment to building safer communities across Alabama.

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