



**Media Release – For Immediate Release Friday, October 12, 2018**

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## **County Celebrates New Firefighter Grads**

The ranks of certified firefighters in the County increased this evening as the County of Grande Prairie, along with the Town of Sexsmith, recognized eight firefighters for their completion of the County's firefighter training program at the 2018 County of Grande Prairie Regional Fire Service graduation ceremony held at Evergreen Park's Clarkson Hall.

The latest group of graduates included candidates from the Bezanson, La Glace and Teepee Creek fire stations. Each year, prospective candidates from the five County fire stations receive the necessary training to become firefighters. As part of a collaborative agreement operating between the Town of Sexsmith and the County, candidates from the Sexsmith Fire Department also participated in the training and were honoured at the ceremony.

"All of our personnel train to the internationally recognized NFPA 1001 professional firefighter standard," said Regional Fire Service Chief Verdun. "It speaks to the dedication of our paid responders to complete this extensive training program all in the service to their communities."

A number of dignitaries, including Deputy Reeve Ross Sutherland, joined over 100 family members and friends to congratulate the graduates.

"Our firefighters play an integral role in the safety of our residents and business owners throughout the County," said Deputy Reeve Sutherland. "As County population grows and development is on the rise, quick response times and highly trained, qualified responders are critical to the well-being and safety of our communities."

A number of awards were handed out throughout the evening. Captain Harold Bulford from the Bezanson Fire Station, and Captain Jason Nesbitt, firefighter Candace Green, and Lieutenant Marc Leger that work from the Clairmont Fire Station, received Chief Coins, an award recognizing fire service members for exceptional service beyond the scope of daily job responsibilities, and are selected through the recommendations of fire service peers, supervisors and Chiefs.

Grande Prairie-Wapiti MLA Wayne Drysdale presented the provincial Alberta Emergency Services Medal (AESM) for long-term service to three members: Captain Nesbitt, as well as firefighter Green and Lieutenant Leger.



Firefighter Tony Huether of the Teepee Creek Fire Station, who was unable to attend the event, was honoured with a 25-year service award. An additional two members received 15-year service awards (Bezanson firefighter Gordon Ford and Captain Bulford, Bezanson Station Captain), 21 members received five-year service awards, and three received 10-year service awards.

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