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DPS Media Advisory #11-042

### **Mount Edgecumbe Students Learn Firefighting Skills at DPS Academy**



(SITKA, Alaska) – Ten high school students from various regions of Alaska are studying to become apprentice firefighters at the Department of Public Safety Training Academy in Sitka. The students, ranging in age from 15 to 17, are part of a new youth program known as the Law Enforcement Cadet Corps (LECC), hosted by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, Sitka Police Department and Mount Edgecumbe High School.

The LECC program, which was started in the fall of 2010, was created at the direction of DPS Commissioner Joseph Masters, who envisioned a program designed to inform and educate rural Alaskan youths about public safety careers. All of the cadets in the LECC program are students at Mount Edgecumbe High School, a boarding school in Sitka. Most of the students are from rural communities, which often have a serious need for trained firefighters. During the school year, 20 high school students regularly meet to learn about public safety topics such as defensive tactics, firearms safety, basic marching drills, latent fingerprints, aviation safety, footprint and tire track evidence.

The Apprentice Firefighter Academy, a summer camp which takes place July 11-20, provides training in a wide range of topics including using personal protective equipment, fire behavior, using fire suppression equipment, organization of local fire departments and teaching fire safety to young children. In addition to fire-related classes, the students participate in a three-day wilderness survival exercise. Teaching the class are personnel from the Alaska State Troopers, the Division of Fire and Life Safety, the Chena Goldstream Fire Department and the Palmer Fire Department. Valuable training assistance is also being provided by members of the Sitka Fire Department. This is the first time the Public Safety Academy has offered this type of training to high school age students. The goal of the Apprentice Firefighter Academy is to provide encouragement and training to young people who might be interested in serving their community by joining a local volunteer fire department. The training does not qualify the youths to enter burning buildings, but it will allow them to provide valuable support assistance in the event of a fire or other emergency in their community.

The training was provided at no cost to the students who hail from Kotzebue, Kotlik, Kipnuk, Dillingham, Quinagak, Anchorage, Holy Cross, Gambell and Fairbanks. Funding for the LECC program was provided by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, the Alaska Police Standards Council, Alaska Fire Chiefs Association and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

For more information contact LECC Program Coordinator Jayson Christner or retired Alaska State Trooper Lt. Charles Lamica at (907)747-6611.