

# **First Responder Salute: Alton Fire Chief Jesse Jemison Commands Respect Having Worked His Way Up The Ladder**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - Present Chief Jesse Jemison is a man who worked his way up the ladder, literally in the Alton Fire Department. Alton Mayor Brant Walker selected Jemison as the chief to succeed Bernie Sebold in the fall of 2019.

“To be honest, it was a surprise when Bernie Sebold left and he suggested me as a chief candidate,” Jemison said. “With Brad Sweetman as deputy chief, I had the opportunity to learn the position properly.”

Chief Jemison said he thinks the other members of the fire department respect the fact that he had already worked hand-in-hand with all of them.

“I have worked with the other firefighters in the trenches, except for a few of the new guys. I respect our firefighters and try to make sure they have what they need.”

Jemison praised his deputy chief and battalion chiefs for their strong efforts and said his job “wouldn’t work without them.”

Jemison says being a first responder is something he has always loved doing. And, what he loves most is serving the community and helping others in their time of emergency or need to come through in a safe fashion.

When the younger firefighters turn and look at Chief Jemison in emergency situations, they know this is a man who came up the ranks. Chief Jemison worked himself to the top of the ladder and has been through just about every emergency situation possible, which commands automatic respect.

*If you have a first responder profile idea, send a photo of the person, and some information to [news@riverbender.com](mailto:news@riverbender.com).*