

Boy Scout Samuel Smith II, 13, an Eagle Scout candidate, speaks Wednesday during the dedication ceremony for the Twin County Fallen Firefighter Memorial at the Life Safety Emergency Management building in downtown Rocky Mount.

## Ceremony dedicates firefighter memorial

BY BRIE HANDGRAAF

Staff Writer

Samuel Smith II has grown up in a world shaped by the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and on Wednesday, he helped to commemorate those who died 12 years ago as well as Twin Counties firefighters who have made the ulti-

mate sacrifice.

"It is hard to believe that 12 years ago, around this time, we were all in awe of what happened in our country in the attacks on Sept. 11," said Louis Smith, the father of the 13 year-old Eagle Scout candidate. "This is a special day for all emergency responders and we offer a moment of silence for

all emergency responders."

For his Eagle Scout project, the Nash Central Middle School student organized Wednesday's ceremony as well as planned the building and dedication of the Twin County Fallen

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Firefighter Memorial at the Life Safety and Emergency Management building in downtown Rocky Mount. He said his father's career as a firefighter inspired the project, which took months of planning and fundraising.

"It is just overwhelming to be here today," the teenager said.

"It is very overwhelmscribe."

About 100 residents, city employees and emergency responders were present for the dedication of the granite memorial, which includes the firefighter prayer and the inscription of five local firefighters who have died since 1906.

The most recent death rial.' was that of Gregory C. Cooke of the Salem Volunteer Fire Department, who died after going into cardiac arrest at the scene of a firefighters and "Amazing

brush fire.

"Greg was truly a man that loved God, his family and his community," Salem Fire Chief Ray Massengale

"He was not just a member of the Salem Volunteer Fire Department.

He was a dear friend to all who knew him and a friend who will be truly missed."

While the memorial has plenty of space for other names, Mayo said it is a void he hopes is never filled.

"Fire department reing. It is a feeling I can't dessponse means that every other attempt to keep a building from burning has failed," he said.

> "May we never forget these sacrifices and ask those, especially in the fire service, to remain vigilant and work constantly to make sure no other names are added to this memo-

A wreath was placed by the memorial before a silver bell was struck three times commemorate fallen



TELEGRAM PHOTOS / ALAN CAMPBELL

Rocky Mount Fire Chief Trey Mayo, left, commends Eagle Scout candidate Samuel Smith II, 13, during the dedication ceremony for the Twin County Fallen Firefighter Memorial on Wednesday at the Life Safety Emergency Management building in downtown Rocky Mount. At right, the Twin County Fallen Firefighter Memorial is seen Inside the building.

Grace" was played by Rocky Mount Senior Firefighter Mike Wayne. The ceremony ended with Rocky Mount Councilman W.B. Bullock urging everyone to remember the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

as you leave this place and go back to your duties, have the actions 12 years ago changed your life?" Bullock asked. "It is my prayer that it has for the better of each of us as individuals and the better of us as a city, a com-"I ask you this morning munity and a nation."