

Robby Gentle Named N.W. Fire Chief

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Veteran firefighter Robby Gentle has been named North Wilkesboro's new fire chief.

North Wilkesboro Mayor Marc Hauser told *The Wilkes Record* about the selection on Friday afternoon, Aug. 4. He replaces the late Jimmy Martin, who passed away on Nov. 30. Kini Hamby had served as interim fire chief since Martin retired in October.

Hauser said of Gentle, "He is a good choice. He can do the job."

Gentle, 62, has served on the North Wilkesboro Fire Department for 35 years – 20 of those years being a fulltime member, working as both an engineer and fire inspector. Prior to that, as a volunteer, he had served as both a lieutenant and captain.

"I'm excited and hope to boost morale, make some changes and move forward," Gentle told *The Wilkes Record*. "It's all about being a team. If you don't have a good team, you don't have anything. I hope to be a good leader and that we do great things. This is an honor for the town to have enough faith in me to make me chief."

Gentle explained that most of the department is made up of volunteers – there are four fulltime employees and 26 volunteers, he said.

"The volunteers are the backbone of the North Wilkesboro Fire Department," he said.

Gentle and his wife, Cathy, have been married for 32 years. They have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Gentle will be officially sworn in on Tuesday evening, Aug. 8, during the meeting of the North Wilkesboro Town Board of Commissioners, Hauser said.