Matt Rickman is new deputy chief of Salem Fire-EMS

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Nearly 10 years after he joined the department, Capt. Matt Rickman has been named the new deputy chief of Salem Fire-EMS.

Rickman, 31, previously served as the city’s EMS coordinator. The deputy chief position has been open since New Year’s Day, when former Deputy Chief John Prillaman became chief, filling the vacancy left by retiring Chief Pat Counts.

“His training and education really impressed us,” Prillaman said. “One thing he’s done is he’s taken advantage of any training that comes his way.”

A Botetourt County native, Rickman started at the department in 2005 and was named a paramedic and senior firefighter in 2008, according to a news release. He moved to the EMS coordinator position in 2011. He lives in Bonsack with his wife and daughter.

Rickman has also served as an emergency room paramedic and emergency health sciences skills and life support instructor at LewisGale Medical Center, Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Carilion Clinic.

As deputy chief, Rickman will oversee hiring and training at the department, as well as supervising EMS services.

Rickman said he hopes to give employees more opportunities to upgrade their EMS skills through training at the Roanoke Valley Regional Fire and Rescue Training Center and programs at Virginia Western Community College and Jefferson College.

“About 85 percent of our call volume is EMS-related, so certainly having perspective by managing that division is going to help me,” Rickman said.

“We have a lot of great internal training going on at the training center. ... We’re going to keep supporting everything that’s going on there to develop our personnel.”

Rickman will officially begin as deputy chief Sunday. Prillaman said the department hopes to fill the EMS coordinator position by May.