



Department
of Commerce



OHIO DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC SAFETY
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NEWS RELEASE

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OHIO FIRE SERVICE HALL OF FAME & EDUCATION AWARDS PRESENTED

Description of each award attached

The Ohio Department of Commerce Division of State Fire Marshal and the Ohio Department of Public Safety Division of EMS today awarded the fire service's highest honors to firefighters and fire officers during the state's 35th annual Ohio Fire Service Hall of Fame ceremony.

The ceremony also recognized the fallen firefighters who died in the line of duty in the past year.

"Anytime a firefighter is lost, it creates a large void," said Department of Commerce Director Jacqueline T. Williams. "It profoundly affects the families, the entire fire department, the whole community and the Ohio fire service."

"These awards are a tribute to those individuals and organizations whose overall contributions go beyond their basic duties and responsibilities and who represent the finest traditions of public service," said Department of Public Safety Director John Born.

Ohio Department of Commerce Division of State Fire Marshal Awards:

Merit Award: Fire Apparatus Operator Daryl Gordon (Cincinnati Fire Department), Lieutenant David Knapke (Williamsburg Fire Department), Firefighter-Paramedic Kevin Ollier (Anderson Township Fire and Rescue Department), Firefighter-EMT Tom Rhamey (Western Holmes County Fire Department, Lakeville Station)

Citizens Award: David McKim (Cambridge, OH), Deputy Todd Barnhart (Delaware County Sheriff's Office)

Ohio Fire Service Valor Award: Firefighter Jason Rish (Scioto Township Fire Department), Firefighter Josh Sullenberger (Piqua Fire Department), Firefighter Bradley Weer (Piqua Fire Department), Lieutenant Randy Dunn (Zanesville Fire Department), Firefighter Thad Krause (Zanesville Fire Department), Deputy Steven Shupp (New London Volunteer Fire Department)

Distinguished Service Award: Chief G. Bruce Smith (Colerain Township Fire Department), Chief R. Mike Warner (Concord Township Fire Department)

Ohio Department of Public Safety Division of EMS Awards:

Ohio Fire Officer of the Year Award: Chief Brian Bennington (Central Townships Joint Fire District)

Fire Service Instructor of the Year Award: Firefighter Jerry Green (Belpre Fire Department)

Fire Prevention Educator of the Year Award: Fire Marshal Michael Dunton (Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department)

Volunteer Fire Department of the Year: McDonald Volunteer Fire Department

Ohio Fire Educator Lifetime Achievement Award: Chief Frederick Redfern (Crooksville Fire Department)

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE DIVISION OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL AWARDS

MERIT AWARDS

Fire Apparatus Operator Daryl Gordon

Fire Apparatus Operator Daryl Gordon passed away March 26, 2015, from injuries sustained during a response to a fire in a Madisonville neighborhood apartment building.

As a senior in high school, he joined the Woodlawn Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter. He remained a volunteer firefighter until he accepted a position with the Cincinnati Fire Department in 1985. During his time there, he volunteered to receive training as a bomb technician and attended the Red Stone Arsenal Hazardous Device School in Huntsville, Alabama. He was later promoted to Fire Apparatus Operator for the Cincinnati Fire Department.

Fire Apparatus Operator Gordon is survived by his wife, Angela; his children, Angelique and Chelsea; his sisters, Arlene and Dorothy; parents-in-law, Joseph and Ann Shives; brother-in-law, Dale Shives; nephews, John, Keli and Kerry; as well as a host of extended family and friends. He was 54 years old.

Lieutenant David Knapke

Lieutenant David Knapke passed away on June 5, 2015, after suffering a sudden cardiac event at the scene of a May 30th structure fire in Mt. Orab.

He spent more than 30 years serving the Williamsburg Fire Department and Williamsburg Township Emergency Services, eventually achieving the rank of Lieutenant. His father worked for the same firehouse, thus, he was around as long as anyone there can remember. His contribution to the fire department outreaches his own life, as his son has also since joined the ranks. He also served as Chief of the Stonelick Township Fire & Rescue Department in Owensville.

He is survived by his wife, Patty; his son, Daniel; two step-children; a brother; and a sister. He was 55 years old.

Firefighter-Paramedic Kevin Ollier

Firefighter and Paramedic Kevin Ollier, of the Anderson Township Fire & Rescue Department, passed away on September 5, 2014 of a sudden illness several hours after responding to a call reporting the smell of smoke in a Cincinnati nursing home.

He was hired on with the Anderson Township Fire and Rescue Department in 2001. Prior to that, he worked as a firefighter and paramedic with the Union Township Fire Department starting in 1990. He also worked for the University of Cincinnati Mobile Care from 1994 to 2012, and was a registered nurse at University Hospital.

He was very passionate about the emergency medical service, caring deeply about his patients as an EMT, paramedic, firefighter and nurse.

He is survived by his daughter, Elisabeth; his mother, Ann; siblings, Kathy, Keith and Teresa; as well as many nieces, nephews and friends. He was 60 years old.

Firefighter-EMT Tom Rhamey

Firefighter and EMT Tom Rhamey passed away on November 28, 2014. He had been in the intensive care unit of Akron City Summa Hospital after responding to a house fire in Shreve.

At the age of 16, he joined the Lakeville Fire Department of the Western Holmes Fire District, where he served as a member, former captain and firefighter for 55 years. He was also a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving in the Vietnam War, and served as a member of the Ohio National Guard, Shreve Armory.

He is survived by his wife, Sandra; his son, Scott; his daughter, Karissa; and five grandchildren: C. Wesley, James Garrett, Paige, Elizabeth and Joshua. He was 71 years old.

OHIO CITIZENS AWARDS

David McKim

On Sunday, February 8, 2015, Guernsey County contractor David McKim was driving through Columbus on his way home to Cambridge when he and a fellow passenger witnessed a crash on Interstate 70, east of Columbus. The vehicle involved had crashed through a wire guardrail and become pinned against a support pole, where it caught fire.

David McKim took immediate action to help the passengers of the vehicle. He slammed on his brakes, jumped from his truck and rushed to the distressed vehicle. In the midst of the chaos, McKim pulled one woman through the back of the SUV, and then pulled another out before the gas tank exploded.

The two passengers' lives rescued and saved from the burning vehicle were the direct result of McKim's bravery that winter night. David McKim brings great credit to himself, his family and the state of Ohio.

Deputy Todd Barnhart

On June 13, 2014, off-duty Delaware County Sheriff's Deputy Todd Barnhart and off-duty Scioto Township Firefighter Jason Rish came across a motor vehicle accident in Lewis Center, involving a passenger vehicle and a motorcycle.

Deputy Barnhart and Firefighter Rish assessed the situation, recognizing the severity of the motorcycle driver's injuries. The driver had suffered a major leg injury and was critically bleeding. Barnhart and Rish took immediate action, applying a tourniquet to the motorcyclist's leg and applied direct pressure until emergency responders arrived.

The swift, courageous action displayed by Deputy Todd Barnhart that day undoubtedly saved the patient's life. His valiant actions bring great credit to himself, the Delaware County Sheriff's office and to Ohio's law enforcement community.

VALOR AWARDS

Firefighter Jason Rish (Scioto Township Fire Department)

On June 13, 2014, off-duty Delaware County Sheriff's Deputy Todd Barnhart and off-duty Scioto Township Firefighter Jason Rish came across a motor vehicle accident in Lewis Center, involving a passenger vehicle and a motorcycle.

Deputy Barnhart and Firefighter Rish assessed the situation, recognizing the severity of the motorcycle driver's injuries. The driver had suffered a major leg injury and was critically bleeding. Barnhart and Rish took immediate action, applying a tourniquet to the motorcyclist's leg and applied direct pressure until emergency responders arrived.

The swift, courageous action displayed by Firefighter Jason Rish that day undoubtedly saved the patient's life. His brave actions bring great credit to himself, the Scioto Township Fire Department and to Ohio's fire service.

Firefighter Josh Sullenberger and Firefighter Bradley Weer (Piqua Fire Department)

In the early morning hours of June 24, 2014, Firefighters Josh Sullenberger and Bradley Weer of the Piqua Fire Department were dispatched to a two-story house fire with the report of a woman trapped on the second floor.

Upon arrival, they found police officers calming the woman, who was hanging out of a small second story window with heavy black smoke pouring out around her.

Access to the window was very tight, as the neighboring home was located just a few feet away. Despite being unable to get a proper angle for the ladder, Sullenberger and Weer placed the ladder as best they could. Still, the woman was unable to escape.

At that point, Firefighter Weer anchored the ladder while Firefighter Sullenberger began an ascent. Sullenberger's air pack became lodged in the soffit and gutter of the neighboring home. He was still about eight feet from the victim. Weer and Sullenberger remained calm and assured the woman that Sullenberger would catch her.

The victim finally jumped head first into Firefighter Sullenberger's arms, who then dropped the woman into Firefighter Weer's arms as he waited on the ground to complete the save.

In the face of unlikely circumstances, Firefighters Josh Sullenberger and Bradley Weer displayed confidence and ultimate dedication to their job, which led to saving the trapped woman's life. Their valiant actions bring great credit to themselves, the Piqua Fire Department and to Ohio's fire service.

Lieutenant Randy Dunn and Firefighter Thad Krause (Zanesville Fire Department)

On the morning of September 28, 2014, Lieutenant Randy Dunn and Firefighter Thad Krause of the Zanesville Fire Department were dispatched to a house fire, where an occupant was trapped inside.

Acting immediately and without a hose line, Lieutenant Dunn and Firefighter Krause entered the burning building. They made it to the second floor of the home and began a search for the victim inside. The pair entered a second floor bedroom to find it had been structurally modified, which could have potentially confused the situation.

Dunn and Krause remained calm, relied on their training, and continued searching for the occupant. They located the unconscious victim and moved him to the front porch roof, where the Assistant Chief was able to bring him down the ladder and begin life saving measures.

The victim survived because of the heroic efforts of Lieutenant Randy Dunn and Firefighter Thad Krause. Despite potential adversary, they displayed bravery, expertise, and remained steadfast in their duties, leading to an outcome that could have otherwise been unfavorable. Their valiant actions bring great credit to themselves, the Zanesville Fire Department and to Ohio's fire service.

Deputy Steven Shupp

On May 2, 2015, Huron County Sheriff's Deputy Steven Shupp was dispatched to a possible medical emergency.

Upon arrival at the home, Steven Shupp smelled something burning, but could not locate any flames or smoke. He opened the front door and was blasted by an unrelenting cloud of smoke.

Shupp was unable to see his hand in front of his face. Drawing from his experience as a volunteer firefighter with the New London Volunteer Fire Department, he dropped to the floor and crawled on his hands and knees, running into items until he came upon a revolving recliner. He spun the recliner around to find a foot at the bottom of the chair. He immediately grabbed a hold of the man and pulled him to the front door to safety.

Rather than think, Deputy Steven Shupp acted. Had it not been for his extreme bravery and dedication to helping others, the occupant of the home may not have survived his smoke-filled home that day. His valiant actions bring great credit to himself, the Huron County Sheriff's office, the New London Volunteer Fire Department and to Ohio's fire and law enforcement communities.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Chief G. Bruce Smith

Suffice it to say that Chief Gordon Bruce Smith deserves his reputation with regard to public service. Beginning in 1969, Chief Smith has served the Colerain community for over 46 years: first as a volunteer firefighter, then as a career firefighter, later as Assistant Chief, eventually as Director and Chief of the Colerain Township Department of Fire and EMS, and always as a leader and mentor for those around him.

Chief Smith's leadership guided the Colerain department in its pursuit of excellence by pioneering methods of staffing, training, service and community risk reduction that many in the profession look to as the model for today's progressive fire service. Beyond the Colerain community alone, Chief Smith has served in positions with the Hamilton County Fire Chiefs', Southwest Ohio Fire Chiefs' and Ohio Fire Chiefs' Associations. More than 18 members of his

department have gone on to become chief officers in departments throughout Ohio and across the country.

In 1988, Chief Smith took on a personal challenge and attended the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. He was among the Charter Executive Fire Officer Class and graduated from the multi-year course in 1989.

Under Chief Smith's direction, the Colerain Township Department of Fire and EMS received numerous prestigious awards, among them the International Association of Fire Chiefs' "Fire Service Award for Excellence" and the Ohio Division of Emergency Medical Service's "Star of Life Award."

Chief Smith represents far more than just his own achievements; it is because of him that the Colerain Township Department of Fire and EMS, and others like it, have grown to become exemplary units of public safety and service.

Chief Gordon Bruce Smith is a great credit to himself, the Colerain Township Department of Fire & EMS and the state of Ohio.

Chief R. Mike Warner

To note that Chief R. Mike Warner has been a member of the fire service for 30 years would be a discredit to his achievements. His influence and achievements far outreach the time he has put towards serving his community.

Chief Warner began his career as a part time, volunteer firefighter in 1976 in rural Hambden Township. Working his way through the ranks, he became Hambden's part time Chief in 1987, the youngest Chief in Geauga County at the time, and at which point his belief in the importance of education and training became evident.

Chief Warner became a Fire Service Instructor in 1986, and in 1991, he was the first Fire Chief in Ohio to require his volunteer fire department members to be trained to the Firefighter Level II standard. In 1993, he earned his Associate Degree in Applied Science with a major in fire science and a minor in business management. Chief Warner then took on a career change and accepted the full-time Fire Chief position in Concord Township.

As Fire Chief in Concord Township, Chief Warner continued to foster educational advancement and training, holding his department to the highest educational standard. Three department members completed the Ohio Fire Executive program, and one began the program this year.

Additionally, upon becoming Chief of Concord Township, Chief Warner united the part-time and full-time department members – who served two separate stations – and created a cohesive team of both full and part-time staff at each station.

From 2011-2012, Chief Warner served as President of the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, where he worked to unite police, sheriff and fire organizations to foster cooperative efforts. Chief Warner has also testified before the state legislature on issues of funding, fire regulations, training and collaboration. His dedicated career in the fire service exemplifies a commitment and enthusiasm for public safety.

Chief R. Mike Warner is a great credit to himself, the Concord Township Fire Department and the state of Ohio.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY DIVISION OF EMS AWARDS

OHIO FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Chief Brian Bennington (Central Townships Joint Fire District)

Chief Brian Bennington has served in the fire service since 1990, beginning his career at Pleasant Township Fire Department in Clark County, swiftly moving through the ranks to eventually become chief at Central Township.

He has successfully achieved one hundred percent Level II certification for his department within an 18-month time period as well as achieved fire certifications for all members of the concurrent Madison County Emergency Medical District, increasing the ready manpower at emergency scenes within his jurisdiction. He has also been able to increase certifications for West Liberty Fire and DeGraff Fire Departments, both in Logan County.

Chief Bennington has been a leader in a movement to upgrade training at rural departments in his area and to provide the ability for rural fire departments to give identical or better quality fire Service response as large metropolitan agencies. When Bennington began as Chief, there were no community college programs in Madison County. As a faculty member of Clark State, he developed an outreach program in conjunction with now-retired Springfield Fire Rescue Division Battalion Chief Steve Goheen, who was the Fire Service Program Director for the college. Currently, all fire Service programs in Madison County are managed through Chief Bennington's tireless work involving Clark State.

His passion for passing on his knowledge and providing outstanding training to fellow firefighters has contributed to safer communities. Bennington has taught close to 1500 firefighters during his career where many have gone on to full-time careers working in fire departments across various states. His colleagues state that Chief Bennington is the epitome of motivation and dedication to the fire service, and the citizens of the State of Ohio, have directly benefited from his exemplary service.

OHIO FIRE SERVICE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

Firefighter Jerry Green (Belpre Fire Department)

Firefighter Jerry Green has served as an EMT and firefighter at the Belpre Fire Department since 1988. He has made it his life task to serve his community. For 16 years, Green managed the fire prevention program for Belpre Fire Department; he participates in the Washington County Library Summer Reading program and Boy/Girl Scouts badge programs, teaches community CPR/First Aid courses and is also active in the Ohio Youth Fire & EMS Training Academy and Federal Valley Fire School. He has also had the unique experience of serving as Belpre City Councilman.

As an instructor at the Mid-East Career Center and technology, Green noticed the lack of fire education in the county and with the help of fellow fire instructors; he assisted nearly 200 firefighters in Southeastern Ohio in upgrading their level of fire training from volunteer status to Level II fire status in a matter of five years.

Green's dedication to the fire service and his ability to build positive relationships with area fire departments and community members is instrumental in the continued expansion of fire education and training in Washington and surrounding counties.

OHIO FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Michael Dunton (Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department)

Fire Marshal Michael Dunton has faithfully served the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department for 29 years. His knowledge of the Ohio Fire Code allowed him to assist in teaching several classes for code officials throughout the State that included fireworks, code updates, and many other educations and training seminars that improved fire safety.

Fire Marshal Dunton served as lead for the fire prevention bureau and subsequently the fire safety education programs including Safety Town. Officials at Western Reserve Hospital sought out his expertise requesting his help in making their operating rooms safer. Fire Marshal Dunton taught two classes on how to prevent and manage fires in the operating room. He also taught the same class to operating room personnel at Akron Children's Hospital.

Fire Marshal Dunton served as a member and past president of the Ohio Fire Officials Association (OFOA) as well as a member, treasurer, and board member of the North Eastern Ohio Fire Prevention Association (NEOFPA).

As Fire Marshal, Michael Dunton is a great asset to the Cuyahoga Community and his contributions have made his community safer. Some additional examples include:

- Assisting the Summit County Prosecutor's Office in criminal arson investigations. His work has led to numerous convictions;
- He was instrumental in the city's smoke detector program that has provided 7,692 smoke detectors to 3,040 homes for 15 years.
- Named Fire Official of the Year in 2014 by the Five-County Building Officials Association.

Fire Marshal Dunton's outstanding leadership, dedication, and service to the community have made a positive impact in the field of fire prevention education in Cuyahoga Falls.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR

McDonald Volunteer Fire Department

McDonald Volunteer Fire Department prides itself on providing protection and service to the Village of McDonald since 1920. The department responds to over 300 emergency calls annually. Their volunteer staff is comprised of a core group of 15 volunteer fire & EMS personnel that are committed to providing excellence in service.

Fire Chief Nick Kish attributes consistent training and continued education of the members of the McDonald Fire Department as the reason for the department being able to provide the best fire and emergency medical services to the residents of Ohio's Finest Village.

Their community commitment to building positive relationships when hosting fire safety programs for the village raises the quality and level of care. Their continued support of community events such as the Memorial Day Service, the Fourth of July Firefighters Homecoming Festival and their Halloween and Christmas in the Village events cultivate community and pride and traditions for McDonald's 3,600 residents.

OHIO FIRE EDUCATOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Frederick Redfern (Crooksville Fire Department)

Retired Fire Chief Fred Redfern is a 44-year veteran of the fire service beginning his career in the U.S. Army in 1971 as a firefighter at Fort Carson, Colorado. He transitioned as a volunteer firefighter with the Village of Crooksville in 1973. Redfern served as Chief of the Crooksville Fire Department for a total of 5 years. During his tenure, he recognized a deficiency in the department's volunteer emergency medical services and started part-time paid staffing, which thrives today. He retired from Crooksville Fire Department in 2014 after 44 years of service, but remains active as a certified fire instructor in the State of Ohio.

He is a member of the International Association of Arson Investigators and the Ohio Society of Fire Service Instructors, serves on the 911 Radio Committee for Perry County, and is a member of the Perry County Firefighters Association and the Muskingum County Firefighters Association.

During his distinguished career, Chief Redfern was instrumental in organizing and setting up the Perry County Fire Investigation Team as well as training many of its members in the skills of fire investigation. Although the team was a volunteer organization, they were recognized throughout the state of Ohio as a premier organization as they had many solved arsons to their credit with a number of criminal convictions through the judicial system.

He has earned the reputation as a passionate and knowledgeable educator that has kept him actively involved in firefighter continuing education. He is a credit to the fire service and has played a key role in fundamentally transforming the fire service in southeastern Ohio.

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