



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort-Port Royal firefighters honored for rescues; retiring Fire Chief earns Career Achievement Award

During the Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Department's annual award and holiday party Dec. 12, more than 20 local firefighters earned recognitions for saving lives on medical calls and at Hunting Island State Park.

The Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Department also presented retiring Fire Chief Sammy Negrón with the Career Achievement Award.

Beaufort-Port Royal Firefighter John Badgett earned the Firefighter of the Year award, and Derrick Washington received the Reserve Firefighter of the Year Award.

"It was a special night to recognize these two fine firefighters, and also to celebrate the life-saving achievements of our other firefighters recognized in the citations," incoming Fire Chief Reece Bertholf said.

"I think it was especially satisfying to all of us to be able to be there when Chief Negrón took the Career Achievement Award for all he has done to improve the Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Department," he said.

In all, 22 Beaufort-Port Royal firefighters earned recognition on seven different citations. Six of the seven citations were for performing cardio-pulmonary resuscitation resulting in a life saved, Bertholf said.

"While the number of CPR saves in 2015 is higher than we've seen in the past, it says a lot about our firefighters' training and experience as first responders. That includes being able to perform basic life-saving procedures," he said.

For example, Firefighter Brittany Thorson earned a citation for exceptional bravery and life-saving skills while working part-time as a lifeguard at Hunting Island State Park. On May 24,

Thorson was off-duty with the fire department and was working as a lifeguard when she saw a young boy who had drifted out too far in the large swells and was in distress.

“Without any regard for her own safety and committed to save the swimmer’s life from an impending tragedy, Firefighter Thorson immediately entered the rough surf and proceeded to swim out to the boy in distress,” the citation reads.

“Upon reaching the victim, Firefighter Thorson was able to calm the swimmer and perform a daring water rescue. Once ashore, the boy was reunited with his parents and friends.”

In another citation, Firefighters Joe Ciccone, Vincent Dean and David Evans responded to a call of a person with a possible coronary problem in Port Royal. Upon arrival, they performed CPR and then used an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to help the patient’s heart re-start. Emergency medical technicians arrived and transported the victim to the hospital where he recovered.

Other Beaufort-Port Royal firefighters named on honors citations for saving lives were:

- Capt. (now Fire Chief) Bertholf
- Capt. Larry Deloach
- Lt. Chip Cooler
- Lt. Peter Singleton
- Lt. Gary Guldner
- Lt. Ross Vezin
- Firefighters Matt Bowsher, John Garber, Josh Waskow, Derrick Howard, Matt Staley, Clint Holmes, Brett Johnson and Hunter Van Dam.

“It was an exceptional night for some amazing firefighters,” Beaufort City Manager Bill Prokop said. “We are very proud of their achievements and appreciate everyone in the department’s never-ending dedication to making Beaufort safer.”

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