



PRESS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION



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Howard County First Responders Win Statewide Awards

A Howard County firefighter has won the Career Firefighter of the Year Award, and a Howard County paramedic has been named the Career Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Provider of the Year by the American Legion – Department of Maryland. This is the fifth consecutive year that a Howard County paramedic has received the annual statewide EMS honor. The competitions are open to fire departments throughout the state of Maryland.

Captain Stephen M. Hardesty is the winner of the Career Firefighter of the Year designation, and Lieutenant Joseph R. Ross is the recipient of the Career EMS Provider of the Year honor. With these awards, the American Legion is recognizing first responders who continually perform above and beyond the call of duty.

“The American Legion is dedicated to honoring and supporting veterans who have served our great country,” said Howard County Executive Ken Ulman. “I am proud that such an outstanding organization has also chosen to honor Captain Hardesty and Lieutenant Ross for their exceptional service to our community. I am pleased to have these two fine public safety professionals representing Howard County.”

“I would like to thank the American Legion and the selection committee for honoring our first responders as firefighter of the year and paramedic of the year,” said Howard County Fire Chief Joseph Herr. “Both of these individuals represent the highest traditions of courage and excellence for public servants in the Department of Fire and Rescue and in Howard County.”

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Captain Hardesty started with the Department of Fire and Rescue in 1990. He has served at a number of fire stations as well as in his current position on the Special Operations Team. He has earned a citation for his quick response to a water rescue in Lisbon where a stranded motorist was successfully saved from rising flood waters. His work has also included traveling to St. Bernard's Parish in Louisiana to help victims of Hurricane Katrina, and a journey to LaPlata, Maryland to assist those affected by the tornadoes there. Captain Hardesty has also received a great deal of instruction in terrorism response procedures from the Department of Homeland Security, including being personally exposed to live chemical agents, and he has in turn trained many first responders from Howard County on how to best perform their responsibilities in the event of a terrorist attack.

Lieutenant Ross has served as a dedicated medical professional with Howard County Fire and Rescue for nearly a decade. He began his career as a volunteer with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, and became a registered paramedic and a certified emergency medical services (EMS) technician. He later gained additional experience through his service in the U.S. Navy. Lieutenant Ross went on to become a certified emergency services instructor, teaching staff from the Department of Fire and Rescue as well as from area hospitals about Advanced Life Support (ALS) programs. He is now one of the most experienced medical instructors with Howard County's Department of Fire and Rescue, teaching emergency medical technician (EMT) and paramedic courses.

Both Captain Hardesty and Lieutenant Ross will receive their awards on July 17 at the American Legion – Department of Maryland annual convention in Ocean City.

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