



For Immediate Release
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Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Awards Announces 2015 Recipients

Boise, Idaho – The National Wildfire Coordinating Group has announced the recipients for the 2015 Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Awards. The annual awards program, sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group’s Incident Emergency Medical Subcommittee (IEMS), recognizes and honors individuals and/or organizations who have demonstrated outstanding work, actions or programs in emergency medical service for our Nation’s wildland firefighters.

“The IEMS Selection Committee received a sizable number of outstanding nominations this year,” said Mike Long, former Florida State Forester and current chair of the IEMS awards selection committee. “While all submissions had merit and importance in serving the wildland fire community, the selected nominations were unique and exceptional for the emergency medical service they provided to wildland firefighters who responded to wildfires last year throughout the nation,” Long added.

The five Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Award categories nominations were selected from include:

- Outstanding Wildfire EMS Individual of the Year
- Outstanding Wildfire EMS Squad/Crew/Team of the Year
- Outstanding Wildfire EMS Distinguished Service of the Year
- Excellence in Wildfire Emergency Medical Service/Rescue
- Lifetime Achievement in Wildfire Emergency Medical Service

Each of the awardees will be recognized with a plaque and award certificate.

The Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award recipients for 2015 are:

John Kennedy, Captain with the Reno Fire Department, is awarded the ***Outstanding Wildfire EMS Individual of the Year Award***. John, on his own initiative over the past four years, has taken the time to train firefighting hotshot crews on life saving low-angle rescue techniques. This training has proved to be an invaluable tool in preparing wildland firefighters with the skills and ability to self-rescue firefighters that have been injured in inaccessible terrain. As a result of the training that John has provided, hotshot firefighters have become more self-sufficient having gained the skills and knowledge to assist and implement low-angle rescue operations on incidents, which has become a benefit to all wildland firefighters.

The **Butte-Jefferson Zone Fire Crew**, based out of the Butte-Jefferson Ranger District, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest in Butte, Mont., and the **Great Basin Smokejumpers**, based in Boise, Idaho, were both awarded the ***Outstanding Wildfire EMS Squad/Crew/Team of the Year Award***.

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The **Butte-Jefferson Zone Fire Crew** is recognized for their response and medical assistance to a 30-year old male critically injured while riding his motorcycle on a remote forest trail. The motorcycle-rider struck a lodge pole pine branch and sustained a serious penetrating wound to his left chest near his shoulder causing significant blood loss and shock. Six wildland firefighters from the Butte-Jefferson Zone fire crew along with the local ambulance responded to save the individual's life. The six members from the zone fire crew included: Jason Willoughby; Zachary Cramer; Mitchel Robbins; Ian De Money; Liana Galayda; and Asheli Huckaba.

The **Great Basin Smokejumpers** are recognized for demonstrating their independent initiative in the areas of quality assurance and patient care. The smokejumpers have created a well-established and robust EMS program with standing medical protocols, extensive training and oversight provided by a medical director, enabling them to provide qualified EMS responders and equipment on every smokejumper mission. Their efforts have paid off in recent years. In 2015 they experienced two significant injuries, providing excellent medical response during the Watson Butte fire, where a smokejumper sustained a back and neck injury while landing, and during a smokejumper parachute training mission in the Blacks Creek area south of Boise where a jumper experienced a hard landing and sustained a broken right humerus, dislocated right shoulder and a fractured rib during landing.

The **Grand Canyon Helitack Crew**, based out of Flagstaff, Ariz., is awarded the ***Outstanding Wildfire EMS Distinguished Service Award***. They are recognized for consistently maintaining a high level of wildfire EMS support at the local, regional and national level including an exceptional short-haul program which gives fire managers a critically needed resource on wildfires. During the 2015 wildfire season, the crew spent 149 days away from the station as the primary medical and short-haul helicopter for large wildfires. While engaged on large wildfires, the crew performed on short-haul and fire medical evacuations of critically injured firefighters and assisted local forests and parks with two search and rescue operations. In addition, the helitack crew assists interagency partners with development of the short-haul program, providing technical expertise on equipment, training and procedures for a safe and effective program.

The **Bozeman Ranger District Wildland Fire Crew**, based out of the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Bozeman, Mont., is awarded the ***Excellence in Wildfire EMS/Rescue Award***. The crew and support team responded to and managed a serious injury to one of their members who was struck by a tree and pinned while working on a saw project in the Porcupine drainage on the Bozeman Ranger District. The crew responded quickly, calmly and professionally to the accident. They had also discussed and planned for just such an event prior to starting the job knowing the hazards of doing saw work in a remote location. This was not just good luck, but good planning and careful attention to safety and leadership. The crew immediately designated an incident commander and began organizing the care, extraction and transportation of their injured crew member. In addition, the support crew in dispatch and at the district office jumped into action and handled all of the logistics, communications and details to make for a smooth operation. This all contributed to the best possible outcome for the injured crew member. Wildland fire personnel involved from the Custer Gallatin National Forest included: Steve Smith; James Ray; James Rust; Corey Barnett; Josh Foster; Dan Kettman; Cristi Heaney; Tasha Taylor; Michael Donch; and Steve Christman.

James Powell, retired U.S. Forest Service employee, is awarded the ***Lifetime Achievement in Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award***. Jim has spent the majority of his career supporting wildfire

emergency medical service and continues that effort during his retirement as a part-time resource to the wildland fire service.

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While Jim's career took him to multiple forests and at least two different regions, Jim continued his commitment to support the wildland fire community by being active in the Medical Unit during incidents. Over the past 25 years, Jim progressed from a line EMT to a Deputy Medical Unit Leader and continues serving for the last 15 years as the Medical Unit Leader on the Pacific Northwest's National Incident Management Team. Jim always approaches the Medical Unit in a pro-active, if not visionary posture. He has chaired the Incident Medical Service Group in the Pacific Northwest Region for many years and has worked on numerous committees and sub-committees in an effort to advance wildland fire emergency medical service. He was instrumental in advocating and implementing the "9 Line" process for a medical incident-within-an-incident which is now standard protocol published in the national interagency *Incident Response Pocket Guide*.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Incident Emergency Medical Subcommittees' mission is to establish a methodology that meets the emergency medical and occupational health care needs of managed incidents, providing information, updates and guidance to enhance the health and safety of wildland firefighters and other personnel during wildland fire incidents.

The Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Awards program was originated to recognize the unselfish acts and actions of individuals and/or organizations for "going above and beyond" their normal duties in rendering emergency medical service care and training for member agency incidents and programs.

For additional information about the National Wildfire Coordination Group's Incident Medical Emergency Subcommittee and the Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award program, please visit: <http://www.nwcfg.gov/committees/incident-emergency-medical-subcommittee/resources>.

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