



News Release

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Wildfire Coordinating Group Announces 2018 Recipients of the “Emergency Medical Service Awards”

Boise, Idaho – The National Wildfire Coordinating Group recently announced the recipients for the “2018 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 mission of IEMS is to identify the need for and establish national emergency medical and occupational health standards and procedures and provide information, updates, and guidance to support the health and safety of workers on wildland fire incidents said Kaili McCray, Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program Manager and current Chair of the IEMS Awards Selection Committee. “The efforts of the awardees for 2018 stood out to the selection committee as particularly significant contributions. They join an elite group who have received these prestigious National Wildfire EMS Awards and we’re proud of them,” McCray added.

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.

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 an award plaque and certificate. The 2018 Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award recipients include:

Heather Wonenberg, Helitack Lead at Yosemite National Park, California is awarded the ***Outstanding Wildfire EMS Individual of the Year Award***. Over the course of the past eight years Heather has invested her personal time and motivation to advance her skills within the medical treatment arena. Heather has taken the initiative to implement the Yosemite Fire and Aviation Helicopter Emergency Medical Services program, training Park medical personnel on proper methods of patient care during helicopter operations, focusing on training modules and field-based scenarios. Heather also acts as the Yosemite Helitack Medical Coordinator. This responsibility allows Heather to maintain the accountability of the crew EMTs and ensure they are receiving quality training and assurance checks. Heather’s wealth of experience enables her to act as a Subject Matter Expert and critical instructor for Park crew and cooperating Park medical personnel. Operationally, Heather is a Short-Haul rescue medic and continually puts the care of others first. Heather has lead calls in countless rescue missions that have saved the lives of many. Heather is a dedicated crew member and crew lead.

(more)

Ally Young, Airtanker Base Staff and **Jeff Miller**, Airtanker Base Manager at Hill Airtanker Base, Uinta-Wasatch Cache National Forest, South Jordan, Utah are awarded the ***Excellence in Wildfire EMS/Rescue Award***. Ally and Jeff performed CPR on a fuel service truck driver and saved his life. Ally and Jeff reacted without hesitation using their training to administer CPR and called for immediate advanced life support. Their collective initial response was directly attributed to saving the driver's life.

Dr. Jon Jui, M.D., Regional Medical Director of Incident Medical Specialist Program, Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6), Portland, Oregon is awarded the ***Outstanding Wildfire EMS Distinguished Service of the Year Award***. Dr. Jui began serving as the medical director for the Region 6 Incident Medical Specialist (IMS) Program in 1988. For 30 years, his leadership has helped the interagency program grow into a highly organized and skilled incident medical support program emulated by other regions across the nation. The quality care that he has instilled in the IMS program has translated to delivery of medical care in fire camp to thousands of firefighters, overhead personnel, and camp support individuals. Dr. Jui has traveled the world working with various local, state and federal agencies responding to people's medical needs. One of the initial responders to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, he also helped victims of the World Trade Center tragedy in 2001 and Hurricanes Ivan and Frances in 2004; he continues to deploy to natural disasters across the US. Dr. Jui's service to Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, and the rest of the nation has been remarkable.

Steve Otoupalik, Incident Medical Specialist/Manager, Willamette National Forest, McKenzie Bridge, Oregon is awarded the ***Janette Peterson Lifetime Achievement in Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award***. Steve is an Air Force Veteran who served in Vietnam, training pilots in survival equipment, escape and evasion. Post-war, he had a full career in the U.S. Forest Service, serving as a Hot Shot in Southern California and eventually retiring from the position of Recreation Coordinator of the McKenzie Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest. Steve became a Paramedic in the late 1970's. While working on the Willamette in a remote Ranger District, Steve brought Advanced Life Support capabilities to this remote area. In 1982, Steve joined the Incident Medical Specialist (IMS) program and has been a paramedic advisor ever since. Steve is part of the IMS cadre at NIFC and serves on the IMS Subcommittee helping develop National Standards for medical care of wildland firefighters. He is very active in Region 6 as a IMS manager, his team works with a Type 1 Incident Management team, PNW3. Steve's vision is that all patients deserve timely and appropriate "patient centric" care. In support of this vision, he has worked tirelessly to provide the tools to share the information the firefighter on scene of an accident or incident have about the incident to get the appropriate care for the sick or injured. One of the fruits of his labor was the original "9-Line" form, which has evolved to the Medical Incident Report carried by all wildland firefighters in their Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG). Steve continues to deploy on IMT assignments and serves his Forest Community as a Paramedic and EMS Chief of the upper McKenzie Fire Department in McKenzie Bridge, OR.

The IEMS Awards Selection Committee would like to remind the Interagency Wildland Fire Community that they are now accepting nominations for the "2019 Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Awards." Nominations are annually accepted from January 1 through December 31 and awardees will be announced by June 30 the following year. [Nomination forms](#) and additional information about the NWCG's Incident Medical Emergency Subcommittee and the Wildfire Emergency Medical Service Award Program are available at: <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/incident-emergency-medical-subcommittee>.

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