

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY**

SUFFOLK, VA (October 18, 2017) The Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department's Awards and Recognition Ceremony honored members of the Department and citizens in addition to officially promoting eight Officers during the event on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the Hilton Garden Inn – Suffolk Riverfront. The promotees and honorees are detailed as follows:

#### **Fire Marshal Charles P. Chapin**

Lieutenant Charles Chapin joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in March of 2002. Lieutenant Chapin is a graduate of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Fire Marshal Academy, Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals. He also is a certified Fire Investigator, Fire Inspector, and Advanced Code Official. Lieutenant Chapin is assigned to the Fire Marshal's Office.

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### **Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Richard L. Stephens**

Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Richard Stephens joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in March of 2009 after retiring with 20 years of service from Portsmouth Fire Rescue and Emergency Services where he served as a Fire Marshal. Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Stephens previously served as the Fire Training Officer for the Department.

### **Captain Steven Henkle**

Captain Stephen Henkle joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in November of 2001. He has completed numerous courses through the National Fire Academy and is currently a technician in all of the disciplines of technical rescue. His previous assignment was Engine 2 B shift. Captain Henkle is currently assigned to Engine 2 A shift.

### **Captain David B. Sweat, III**

Captain Braxton Sweat has been with Suffolk Fire & Rescue for 22 years. Captain Sweat has an Associate's Degree in Fire Science and in Emergency Medical Services. He holds numerous fire certifications and is a National Registered Paramedic. He also holds the distinguished title of being an Eagle Scout. Captain Sweat is currently assigned to Engine 6 on the B-Shift.

### **Lieutenant Alan D. Bain**

Lieutenant Alan Bain joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue on September of 2008. He achieved the level of paramedic in December of 2011. Lieutenant Bain's previous assignment was Ladder 6 on "A" shift. His current assignment is Engine 1 on "c" shift.

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### **Lieutenant Dustin J. Hummer**

Lieutenant Dustin Hummer joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in March of 2007. He received his Paramedic certification in 2013 and graduated from the Hampton Roads Fire Officer Academy in 2016. Lieutenant Hummer's previous assignment was Ladder 5 A shift. His current assignment is EMS 1 B shift.

### **Lieutenant Jeffrey W. Matthews**

Lieutenant Jeffery Matthews joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue in March of 2009. He received his Associate's Degree in Emergency Medical Services in 2015, and obtained a Career Studies Certificate in Critical Care in 2016. Lieutenant Matthews' previous assignment was Engine 25 C shift. His current assignment is EMS-1 C shift.

### **Lieutenant Steven D. Speight**

Lieutenant Steven Speight began his career with Suffolk Fire & Rescue on September 1, 2006. He received his Associate's Degree in Fire Science in 2010. Lieutenant Speight's previous assignment was Ladder 3 A shift. His current assignment is Engine 2 B shift.

### **Senior Firefighter Les Lemasters – Firefighter of the Year**

Senior Firefighter Les Lemasters has been a member of Suffolk Fire & Rescue since 2002. He has worked tirelessly on the Department uniform and turn-out gear program. Lemasters has spent countless hours on and off duty working with clothing and gear vendors. Les's hard work and dedication has made the Department a safer place for members and the citizens they protect.

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### **Lieutenant Eric Thursh – Paramedic of the Year**

Lieutenant Eric Thursh has been a member of Suffolk Fire & Rescue since 1996. Lt. Thursh has obtained numerous certifications, to include Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue, Rope Rescue, and Vehicle Rescue. He has been instrumental in the development of the EMS program for Suffolk Fire & Rescue, to include purchasing and distribution of medical supplies, and preparing new ambulances for service. Lt. Thursh was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in November 2003. He is currently assigned to Fire Station 6 on Kings Fork Road.

### **Eric Wynne – Volunteer Firefighter of the Year**

Eric Wynne was named the Volunteer Firefighter of the Year for his service with the Holland Volunteer Fire Department. In the past year, Wynne has shown the Officers and career staff at Station 7 that he was meant to become a firefighter. He continues to strive forward as a role model for other members within the Department. He has completed FF2, hazardous materials awareness, and hazardous materials operations for the calendar year of 2016.

### **Christian Hayne – Most Active Volunteer**

Christian Hayne became a member of the Holland Volunteer Fire Department in September of 2015. Christian has completed Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, Hazardous Materials Awareness, and Hazardous Materials Operations for calendar year 2016. He gave a helping hand with the annual Ruritan Founder's Day Parade preparations and showed support at the annual Suffolk Peanut Festival throughout the entire event.

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### **Birdsong Peanuts – Certificate of Appreciation (Civilian Award)**

Birdsong Peanuts has been an avid supporter of Suffolk Fire & Rescue for many years. On April 18, 2016, Birdsong Peanuts allowed the Department's tech rescue team to use one of their warehouse facilities for a rope rescue training drill. In the many days leading up to the drill, the Birdsong staff was more than accommodating in assisting members with the planning and numerous functions required to make the drill a success. The training drill allowed the tech team the invaluable opportunity to put into practice countless hours of rope rescue training in a real world scenario. Birdsong Peanuts should be commended for dedicating an entire peanut warehouse during their very busy production time, providing the Department's members the chance to enhance their knowledge and skills needed to continue to provide outstanding services to our citizens.

### **Brinkley's Wrecker Service – Certificate of Appreciation (Civilian Award)**

Brinkley's Wrecker Service has been a devoted supporter of Suffolk Fire & Rescue for many years. On August 3, 2016, Brinkley's allowed the Department access to their facility and equipment for a heavy vehicle rescue training drill. Brinkley's staff was more than accommodating in not only assisting the members with the drill but also providing valuable instruction which contributed to the overall success of the training evolution. The drill allowed the tech rescue team the opportunity to put into practice countless hours of heavy vehicle rescue training. Brinkley's should be commended for not only dedicating their time, facility and equipment, but also for providing heavy vehicles to train with. This commitment afforded members the invaluable chance to enhance their knowledge and skills needed to continue providing outstanding service to the citizens of Suffolk.

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### **Davis Lakes Campground – Certificate of Appreciation (Civilian Award)**

Davis Lakes Campground has been a supporter of Suffolk Fire & Rescue in years past and they hosted a statewide Virginia Department of Fire Programs Surface Water Rescue course in June 2015. In the summer of 2016, they opened up their entire campground for the Department to conduct water rescue training. Over the course of a month, instructors within the Department trained the entire Fire Department in the basics of surface water rescue. This training allowed Department members to become familiar with the new water rescue program and the associated equipment. Over 1000 hours of training was conducted using real world scenarios in the lake. The Davis Lakes Campground should be recognized for partnering with Suffolk Fire & Rescue and allowing access to the campground during the busy summer season. The campground allowed the Department access to different lakes and other buildings for classroom training.

### **Jacob Morton and Tec Locascio – Certificate of Meritorious Conduct**

Jacob Morton and Ted Locascio were presented with the Certificate of Meritorious Conduct. On December 28, 2016, there was an emergency at a construction site on Bridge Road near the Mills Godwin Bridge. The parties involved all work for Magann Construction and were replacing high voltage power line towers in the Nansemond River. An employee who had been experiencing tightness in his chest earlier in the day suddenly slumped over and appeared not to be breathing. Jacob Martin, who heard the distress calls, ran down to where the employee was and began Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Ted Locascio heard the call for help and ran to the office trailer and grabbed the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). Once Mr Locascio reached the employee, they placed the AED on him and followed the appropriate protocol for the incident that was taking place. When Suffolk Fire & Rescue arrived, they took over patient care and the victim was transported to a local hospital.

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The patient is here today because of the quick thinking of Mr. Morton and Mr. Locascio and their proper use of an AED.

**Captain Steve Johnson, Firefighter Derrick Felton, Fire Medic Manuel Franco, Lieutenant Roger Stinnette, Firefighter Vincent Posey and Fire Medic Christopher Cook – Certificate of Meritorious Conduct**

Captain Steve Johnson, Firefighter Derrick Felton, Fire Medic Manuel Franco, Lieutenant Roger Stinnette, Firefighter Vincent Posey and Fire Medic Christopher Cook were given a Certificate of Meritorious Conduct. On February 17, 2016, units were dispatched to a shooting involving a 3 year old male. When Engine 6 arrived on scene, they found a 3 year old male sitting in the living room with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Engine 6 personnel quickly controlled the bleeding and calmed the child. When Medic 6 arrived, they evaluated the child and requested Nightingale for transport. The child was moved to Medic 6 where personnel continued Advanced Life Support (ALS) care. Engine 6, Medic 6 and EMS 1 showed exemplary teamwork and provided remarkable care to a toddler experiencing an unimaginable traumatic event. The crews were able to console the toddler despite the fact that he was separated from his mother and at times even had the toddler smiling. According to his mother, the child is leading a normal, happy life today thanks to the crew on scene that day.

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### **Senior Firefighter Lucas Weaver – Medal of Merit**

Senior Firefighter Lucas Weaver exemplifies the values of the Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue. He is constantly trying to improve the Department and make a safer working environment for all who work there. He is an experienced Firefighter who does not hesitate to lead training or PT to keep himself and others knowledgeable and in peak physical health.

In addition to his normal day to day duties, Weaver is the Committee Chairman of the Health and Safety Committee and a member of the Personal Protective Equipment Committee as well as a member of the Technical Rescue Team. Weaver has also spearheaded the Department's Cancer Prevention Initiative and is constantly working towards department wide NFPA compliant physicals. Weaver is a motivated Firefighter who cares about Suffolk Fire & Rescue and regularly goes above and beyond to better himself and others.

### **Master Firefighter Todd Helmick – Medal of Valor**

Master Firefighter Todd Helmick was recognized with the Medal of Valor. On October 18, 2016, a call dispatched as an EMS call but turned out to be a technical rescue incident which ultimately involved multiple area jurisdictions. Two workers at John C. Holland Landfill were unresponsive and submerged in a culvert pipe approximately 25 feet deep. Upon arrival, Helmick began to assist with every aspect of the incident to include rigging, air monitoring and patient packaging preparations. When the time came for someone to make entry into the space, he volunteered despite the hazardous conditions. Helmick climbed down the ladder into the pipe while being attached to rope rescue and a breathing air system. Once at the bottom, he connected each victim to the rope system and they were raised out of the confined space.

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Master Firefighter Helmick performed his duties proficiently and professionally and did so despite the dangers. His actions reflected his technical rescue training and are a direct reflection on his dedication to the citizens of the City of Suffolk and the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department.

### **Battalion Chief David P. Harrell – Fire Chief’s Award of Excellence**

This year’s recipient of the Fire Chief’s Award of Excellence started his career in the fire service with the Driver Volunteer Fire Department in 1995 and was one of the first to enroll in the Southside Regional Fire Academy as a volunteer, graduating in 1996. Following graduation, Battalion Chief David Harrell joined Suffolk Fire & Rescue where he was promoted to Lieutenant in September 2002, Captain in February 2005, and was named Firefighter of the Year in 2012. He was promoted to Battalion Chief in June of 2015 and his current assignment is Battalion 1 C Shift covering Downtown Suffolk. He also is the Commander of the Department’s Special Operations, which includes the Communications Team, Search and Rescue Team, Water Rescue, and Technical Rescue. He holds numerous certifications from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and other agencies. He earned an Associate’s Degree in Fire Science in 2003 from Tidewater Community College and a Bachelor’s Degree in Multidisciplinary Studies from Liberty University in 2011. He is currently enrolled in Old Dominion University pursuing a Master’s Degree in Public Administration.

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