



Firefighters honored heroic efforts, included on list are Zobrist, Schrage, Alton's Whiteside and Wood River firefighters

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SPRINGFIELD – Each and every day, firefighters throughout the state put their lives on the line to protect their communities.

Recently, firefighters gathered across Illinois in Springfield to remember firefighters who have given their lives in the line of duty and honor others for their heroic efforts saving lives within the year.

Two firefighters were also presented with The Medal of Honor award during the ceremony. It's the highest award given to firefighters by the state of Illinois. Lieutenant **Eric Schrage**, from the Collinsville Fire Department and Paramedic **Todd Zobrist**, from the Highland Fire Department/EMS were selected for demonstrating selflessness and personal courage above and beyond the call of duty. While on an EMS call, Zobrist could see headlights under the water when he and his partner arrived at Silver Lake. A caller had not seen anyone exit the vehicle, so Zobrist jumped into what was very cold water and swam 75 feet out and back to rescue a 3-month-old boy from the vehicle. He had to dive inside the vehicle to rescue the child.

Nine firefighters were honored with the Medal of Valor award. It is given by the state of Illinois to a firefighter for an act of heroism or bravery that clearly demonstrated courage and dedication in the face of danger while in the performance of duty.

Recipients include:

Captain Daniel Whiteside, Alton Fire Department

Firefighter Aaron Pihl, Belvidere Fire Department

Lieutenant Shawn Schadle, Belvidere Fire Department

Firefighter Jeff Vaughan, Belvidere Fire Department

Firefighter Eric Claudio, Chicago Fire Department

Lieutenant/EMT John O'Brien, Chicago Fire Department

Firefighter/Paramedic Andrew Hoff, Downers Grove Fire Department

Firefighter/Paramedic Scott Sohn, Downers Grove Fire Department

Firefighter/Paramedic Quinn Triplett, Downers Grove Fire Department



Fourteen firefighters received the Firefighter Excellence Award for an act of service in the line of duty, demonstrating excellence and professionalism in service to the citizens of the state of Illinois.

Included in that list were Engineer Kris Ayers, Wood River Fire Department, Engineer Bill Hall, Wood River Fire Department and firefighter Jamie Wells.

"Our firefighters face great danger with courage and bravery each time they enter a burning building," said Fire Marshal Matt Perez. "Today, we remember those we have lost and honor firefighters for their heroism and sacrifice to keep our communities safe."