

# **First Responders Salute: Alton's Brad Sweetman Leaves Legacy As A First Responder With 'Tireless Work Ethic,' Plus Constant Concern For Residents**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - On one of his last days at work, assistant Alton Fire Chief, Brad Sweetman was leading a dramatic rescue situation in a deep ravine at 20th Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard in Alton.

Sweetman was a firefighter/paramedic through his long and distinguished career with the Alton Fire Department that spanned 31 years. Sweetman retired in late fall 2020. The amount of fire-rescue type of situations he aided in is likely as many if not more than any other firefighter/paramedic at the Alton Fire Department.

Sweetman was Deputy Fire Chief under Alton Fire Chief Jesse Jemison, a man who has a deep and lasting respect for Sweetman. He said Brad is greatly missed by the entire department.

“Brad is a tireless, hard-working individual,” Fire Chief Jemison said. “A lot of people used Brad as an example of what to follow as a firefighter and first responder. Brad helped me a great deal when I was a brand new chief.”

Sweetman and Jemison began their careers at close to the same time in the late 1980s and early 1990s respectively. Jemison lives down the street from Sweetman and the two remain friends.

“He always treated me and the other firefighters with the utmost of respect,” Chief Jemison said.

Even if the call was in the middle of the night and sometimes a very difficult situation, Brad Sweetman was always responsive to the media, always cordial, and provided thorough information, which has been a standard for the department under Jemison and previous chief, Bernie Seabold. Sweetman constantly mentored the younger firefighters in a variety of training situations. Brad was one who helped make sure Alton firefighters were ready for just about any situation they might encounter.

Chief Jemison had perhaps the most appropriate way to describe Brad Sweetman as a firefighter/first responder: “I don’t know what else I could say about Brad other than he was one of the best firefighters we have ever had with the Alton Fire Department and he was an excellent deputy chief.”

*If you have a first responder profile idea, send a photo of the person, and some information to [news@riverbender.com](mailto:news@riverbender.com).*

