

Edwardsville and Glen Carbon Offering Free CPR Classes

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE/GLEN CARBON - The Edwardsville Fire Department and the Glen Carbon Fire Protection District will host a series of free CPR classes throughout the month of February as part of their “Savings Hearts for Valentines” program.

The free classes will be held February 1 and 15 at the R.P. Lumber Center, located at 6289 Tiger Drive in Edwardsville, and February 11 and 25 at Glen Carbon Fire Station No. 1, located at 199 S. Main Street in Glen Carbon. Participants will attend one two-hour class. There will be a maximum of 20 people, ages 14 and older, per session.

“The more people we have who are trained in CPR out in the world, the better chance that we’ll have someone close by in emergency situations who could make that life-or-death difference,” Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said.

The classes will cover CPR basics, including a compressions-only version that does not require mouth-to-mouth breathing for those who are not comfortable using that method. The class also will emphasize the importance of quickly calling 911, and educate attendees on how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Priority will be given to those who live or work in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon. To reserve a spot in one of the free sessions, contact the Edwardsville Fire Department at 618-692-7540.

These free CPR classes are being offered after a man's life was saved by CPR last month. In December 2022, Rick Smith collapsed at his workplace in Edwardsville's Gateway Commerce Center. Co-worker Jamie Johnson quickly called 911, and Edwardsville Public Safety Telecommunicator Michele Russell assessed the situation while dispatching paramedics.

She instructed Smith's co-workers - Jason Guyette, Samantha Womack, and Steve Foust - to initiate CPR. With Russell's aid, they continued CPR for about 12 minutes until Edwardsville paramedics took over and transported Smith to Anderson Hospital in Maryville. Smith was treated and later released.

At the Edwardsville City Council meeting on Tuesday, January 17, commendations were announced for Russell, Johnson, Guyette, Womack, and Foust for their help saving Smith's life. Edwardsville Firefighter-Paramedics Joey Cruz, Tanner Sweetman, Cole Schrage, Sarah Jansen, and Fire Capt. Robert Morgan were also acknowledged for their roles in the encounter.