Edwardsville Police & Fire Departments Honor Heroic Efforts Of Officer, Citizens

by Cathy A. Hensley
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville Police and Fire Departments honored two citizens and one of the City's police officers for their heroic actions during life-threatening incidents this spring. The three were honored at the Tuesday, June 20, City Council meeting.

Officer Christopher Noga is receiving the Life Saving Award for his efforts to assist a pedestrian who had been gravely injured on March 15, 2023, when he was struck by a truck on the SIU Northern Access Road. An area man, Earl Smith Jr., will receive a Citizen Commendation for his assistance during the same incident. Smith was a passerby when the pedestrian was injured, and was on the scene and had applied a makeshift tourniquet when Officer Noga arrived. The officer, who joined the Edwardsville Police Department in early 2022, then applied a department-issued tourniquet while Smith continued to comfort the pedestrian, who survived despite losing a leg in the incident.

Fire Chief James Whiteford credited the "excellent care" the pedestrian received from Noga and Smith as contributing to his recovery. Police Maj. Mike Lybarger also praised the heroic effort, noting that "their actions reflect the highest level of professionalism that we strive to achieve and maintain within our community."

Another man, Edwardsville resident Michael Lask, also is receiving a Citizen Commendation, but for an incident on April 8, 2023. That day, Lask saw that his neighbor's home was on fire; he alerted his spouse to call 911 and then went to warn his neighbor. A first-floor resident was able to escape, but a second-floor resident was unable get out of the home. Lask grabbed his ladder and attempted to help his neighbor

and her two dogs. When the Fire Department arrived, Lask continued to assist the firefighters in getting the resident and her dogs to safety.

Lybarger said that Lask's "willingness to get involved played a significant role in getting his neighbors and their animals to safety."

The Edwardsville Police and Fire Departments bestow the Citizen Commendation award to those who provide significant assistance to the department in achieving their mission or saving a life. The departments' Life Saving Award is given to City public safety personnel whose actions play a pivotal role in life-threatening situations.