FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Fire Marshal Honors Fallen Firefighters

Firefighters gather for 25th Annual Illinois Fallen Firefighter Memorial and Firefighting Medal of Honor Awards

SPRINGFIELD - Firefighters from across the state gathered in Springfield to remember fallen firefighters who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Firefighters John “Mike” Cummins of the Homer Fire Protection District and Lawrence Matthews from the Village of Dolton Fire Department were honored for their heroic sacrifice during the 25th Annual Illinois Fallen Firefighter Memorial and Firefighting Medal of Honor Awards Ceremony. Their families were presented with the Duty Death Gold Badge by Fire Marshal Matt Perez.

"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.”

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.

- Lieutenant Eric Schrage, Collinsville Fire Department
- Paramedic Todd Zobrist, Highland Fire/EMS

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. Recipients include:

• Firefighter Mark Beck, Belvidere Fire Department
• Firefighter James Kriebs, Belvidere Fire Department
• Firefighter Jason Swanson, Belvidere Fire Department
• Firefighter Nicolas Thornton, Belvidere Fire Department
• Captain Mark Zumbragel, Belvidere Fire Department
• Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Covelli, Downers Grove Fire Department
• Firefighter/Paramedic Kevin Schrader, Downers Grove Fire Department
• Paramedic Ty Barr, Highland Fire/EMS
• Firefighter Ben Bentley, Peru Fire Department
• Firefighter Alex Duncan, Peru Fire Department
• Lieutenant Neil Nadolski, Peru Fire Department
• Engineer Kris Ayers, Wood River Fire Department
• Engineer Bill Hall, Wood River Fire Department
• Firefighter Jamie Wells, Wood River Fire Department

In addition, six units received the Firefighter Excellence "Teamwork Unit Citation" Awards for an act of service in the line of duty, demonstrating excellence, teamwork, and professionalism in service to the citizens of the state of Illinois. Recipients include:

**Blue Island Fire Department**
• Firefighter John Duffy
• Lieutenant Joseph Olson
• Firefighter Joseph Pinnick
• Firefighter Matthew Sutkus

**Broadview Fire Department**
• Firefighter David Cohen
• Firefighter Chris Mazurkiewicz
• Firefighter Brian Sullivan
• Captain Ned Thoma

Chicago Heights Fire Department
• Lieutenant Eric Einert
• Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Marshall
• Firefighter/Paramedic Raymond Peterlin

North Chicago Fire Department
• Lieutenant James Axtt
• Firefighter Marc Harman
• Firefighter/Engineer Brian Henderson
• Firefighter Reid Mammoser
• Firefighter Carlos Perez

Orland Fire Protection District
• Lieutenant Scott Olinski
• Firefighter Jason Postma
• Firefighter Robert Proctor
• Firefighter Tim Sierazy
• Engineer Robert Walsh

Pana Fire Department
• Lieutenant Kyle Anderson
• Firefighter Corey Bland
• Chief Rodney Bland
• Firefighter Brian Carlson
• Firefighter Kevin Christer
• Firefighter Tim Christer
• Firefighter Adam Cloe
• Firefighter Troy Cloe
• Firefighter Joe Ellenberg
• Firefighter Mike Foster
• Firefighter Rickie Ginger
• Firefighter Blake Hadley
• Firefighter James Hicks
• Captain Wesley Horton
• Firefighter Jay Kaiser
• Firefighter Kenny Kaiser
• Firefighter Andy Macari
• Firefighter Matthew Mahnke
• Assistant Chief Roger Moss
• Firefighter Mike Owens
• Firefighter Heath Simpson
• Firefighter Tyler Sims
• Firefighter Nathan Smith
• Firefighter Daniel Tallman
• Firefighter Kirk Weddle

One firefighter received the Certificate of Recognition which acknowledges those nominated for their dedication to the principles and traditions of the fire service, to the state and the community, with honor and integrity.

• Firefighter/Paramedic Mark Buettner, Bolingbrook Fire Department

The awards presented today recognized heroic actions during 2017. Nominations were reviewed and awardees selected by the Illinois Fire Fighting Medal of Honor Committee.