

Headlines



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

May 8, 2008

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR:

Since 1980 the Knights of Columbus have sponsored a Civic Awards Night during which the Rock Island Police Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year are honored. Mr. Louie Alongi of the Knights of Columbus decided to organize a Rock Island Civic Awards Night after reading about a Knights of Columbus dinner elsewhere honoring police officers. It is now the group's main community project. When asked to comment on the event, Mr. Alongi mentioned that the many arrangements for Civic Awards Night are but a small gesture of appreciation. "The least we can do is once a year, sit down and say, 'Thanks a lot'".

Honorees for the event's 29th anniversary are Jonathan Cary, Police Officer of the Year, and Darren LeBeau, Firefighter of the Year. The police officer and firefighter were selected for this honor by their co-workers in each department. This year's event will be held Sunday, June 8, 2008 at the VFW Hall in Rock Island, IL. There is a social hour at 5:00 P.M. followed by the dinner, entertainment, and award presentations at 6:00 P.M. Reservations for this event, which is open to the public for a cost of \$10.00 per person / \$5.00 per child, may be made through June 3rd by calling Mr. Louie Alongi at 786-9625 or 235-6796.

POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR HONOREE:

Officer Jonathan Cary

Officer Jonathan Cary, who was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana and moved to Rock Island in 1996, was hired by the Rock Island Police Department on October 17th, 2005. Prior to joining the police department, Officer Cary attended the Bible Missionary Institute where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Education. Following his graduation he was the manager of Simoniz Car Wash in Rock Island for five years, and he joined the Rock Island Police Auxiliary in 2003.

Since being hired by the Rock Island Police Department Officer Cary has been assigned to patrol duties in the Field Operations Bureau. He became a member of the Emergency Response Team on November 9, 2007, has done bike patrol duties, and was assigned to the Special Assignment Team in the summer of 2007. This team was formed to look for narcotics and persons involved in shootings in high crime areas.

On January 17, 2007, he was given a Distinguished Service Bar for his exemplary performance and dedication to duty when he, without regard for his own safety, apprehended a fleeing subject after a self-initiated traffic stop. Upon apprehension, this subject hit Off. Cary in the face with what was believed to be a metal object. This object was determined to be a screwdriver that was sharpened to a point with black electrical tape as a handle. It was felt this subject meant to cause great bodily harm or death to this officer or any other that he came in contact with.

Officer Cary was nominated by his peers for being a pro-active, efficient, and productive officer who made 366 arrests in the last 12 months, with 50 being felonies, and seized over \$4,300 from suspected drug dealers. He uses his own time to review information he feels aids him in his duties as a police officer and shares this information with fellow officers. He has a “can do” attitude and always puts the needs of the Department over his own.

Officer Cary has been a valuable asset to the Rock Island Police Department and the citizens of Rock Island and know he will continue to be such in the future.

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR HONOREE:

Fire Captain Darren LeBeau

Fire Captain Darren LeBeau was chosen by his peers to be recognized as the 2008 Knights of Columbus Firefighter of the Year. As stated in the nomination letter submitted by Captain Mickey Johnston, Captain LeBeau “has set a standard of pride and dedicated service that has raised the bar for all members of the Rock Island Fire Department.”

Capt. LeBeau is a twelve-year veteran of the Rock Island Fire Department. His positive, professional approach as a firefighter/paramedic clearly display his leadership potential. Darren LeBeau was promoted to Lieutenant in January, 2005 and to Captain in May of 2007. Captain LeBeau has aggressively pursued additional training and has received numerous certifications including:

- Fire Officer I and II
- Hazardous Materials Technician (approx. 140 hours)
- Technical Rescue Technician (approx. 400 hours)
- Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Instructor

Captain LeBeau has stepped up as a leader on the MABAS 43 Regional Technical Rescue Team. He has taken additional training to be certified as a State Instructor. This extra effort will enable the fire department to train their personnel locally at the Regional Fire Training Facility with local instructors. Captain LeBeau has committed many hours of off-duty time to train area firefighters in safe, coordinated response to rescue situations.

Captain LeBeau has also become an advocate for “back to the basics” fundamental fire service training for department personnel. His creative approach to ensuring the competency and safety of his crew has spread to all stations and shifts. This type of leadership has had a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire department’s operations. It also inspires other company officers and firefighters to take that extra step to make a difference. Fire Captain LeBeau’s commitment to the department, the City and its citizens has “set the standard” for others to follow.