
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Firefighters Receive Medal of Valor from Governor Award is California's Highest Public Servant Honor

Sacramento – Today Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger awarded two CAL FIRE employees the Governor's Medal of Valor for demonstrating extraordinary bravery and heroism in saving a life. The firefighters received the Medal of Valor, the highest honor that California bestows upon its public servants, as part of a ceremony recognizing 27 state employees.

“I am proud Governor Schwarzenegger is recognizing both Steve Guarino and Jeff Young today,” said Chief Del Waters, director of CAL FIRE. “They truly are a reflection of the caliber of employee we have working for CAL FIRE and their actions exemplify the excellent service the citizens of California deserve.”

Stephen Charles Guarino of Citrus Heights

On October 27, 2008, CAL FIRE Deputy State Fire Marshal Supervisor Stephen Charles Guarino was in Sacramento County traveling on Interstate 5 when he witnessed a pick-up truck and van chasing and slamming into each other through traffic. When the van attempted to force the pick-up truck off the road, the truck lost control, ran off the highway, collided with a tree, and caught fire.

Deputy Guarino stopped his vehicle and saw that the male driver was going in and out of consciousness. The truck doors were jammed shut, so Deputy Guarino used a fire extinguisher to break the driver's side window and pulled the driver out of the burning truck. Deputy Guarino's heroic and speedy actions saved the man's life.

Jeff Young of Clovis

On June 25, 2008, a Boy Scout troop was camping in the remote Wishon Lake area of eastern Fresno County, when a fourteen-year-old member of the troop crossed a stream and a boulder, estimated to weigh about 10 tons, rolled and trapped the boy's leg. The Boy Scout leader hiked four and a half hours and over 10 miles to call 911. Fire Captain Jeff Young was dispatched as part of a CAL FIRE/Fresno County Fire Technical Rescue Team along with an Army National Guard Black Hawk Helicopter.

Due to space restrictions on the helicopter, Young was the only member of the CAL FIRE Rescue Team that was able to fly into the remote area for the rescue. After a 45 minute hike in the dark, through treacherously steep and rocky terrain while carrying rescue equipment, Young was able to reach the boy's location. After nearly three hours of rescue efforts, Fire Captain

Young and the team were able to free the boy's leg and carry him back through the perilous terrain, to the helicopter for transport to the nearest trauma center. Fire Captain Young's actions, without regard for his personal safety, saved the young boy.

The Medal of Valor, which started in 1959, is the highest honor that California bestows on its public servants and is awarded to California state employees who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the normal call of duty, at great risk to their own personal safety or life, to save the life of another.

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Editors Note: Photos of the ceremony are available by contacting Daniel Berlant at Daniel.Berlant@fire.ca.gov