

Fire Service Recognizes Community Organizations

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The Lincoln County Fire Chiefs Association presented its Community Merit Award to four recipients during the association's annual awards ceremony at the South Bristol Fire Department on Wednesday, Aug. 17.

Lifespan Family Healthcare LLC, the Rev. David O'Donnell, R.H. Reny Inc., and Skip Cahill Tire Inc. received the awards.

Lifespan Family Healthcare, at 80 River Road in Newcastle, is literally a next-door neighbor to the Newcastle Fire Department, at 86 River Road.

Dr. Michael Clark and his staff "professionally and efficiently" process health evaluations, medical screenings, and "fit for duty" assessments, according to the nomination letter.

"This is a vital part of our safety and our mission," according to the letter from the Newcastle Fire Co. "Without it, we could be at risk, which, in turn, could put others at risk."

O'Donnell serves as the chaplain for the Newcastle Fire Department and the pastor of the Faith Baptist Church in Newcastle, but his nomination was from Jefferson Fire and Rescue.

Jefferson Fire and Rescue responded to a pair of traumatic incidents on Dec. 23 and 24, 2015, according to the nomination from Jefferson Fire Chief Walter Morris.

On Dec. 23, a large tree limb fell and struck a 22-year-old employee of a local tree service, who died of his injuries. On Christmas Eve, a man bringing a Christmas tree home with his wife and granddaughter had a heart attack and died.

"While incidents like these are always traumatic to first responders, the fact that they happened at Christmastime only heightened the traumatic effect of these incidents," Morris said.

Morris contacted regional emergency medical services agencies in an attempt to set up a "critical incident stress debriefing," but did not hear back due to the holiday.

Newcastle Deputy Fire Chief Casey Stevens encouraged Morris to contact O'Donnell. By 1 p.m. on Christmas Eve, O'Donnell was leading a debriefing at the Jefferson fire station.

"The fact that Rev. O'Donnell was willing to change his plans on what is likely one of the busiest days of the year for a pastor, with Christmas Eve services and Christmas Day service preparations, speaks volumes to his willingness to help those in need," Morris said. "His caring, compassion, and understanding certainly helped our members get through a most difficult time.



Lincoln County Fire Chiefs Association Vice President Walter Morris (left) presents the association's Community Merit Award for Lifespan Family Healthcare to Dr. Michael Clark. (J.W. Oliver photo)

“There is no doubt in my mind that without the support and guidance Rev. O’Donnell provided to Jefferson Fire and Rescue, we would have lost some dedicated volunteers,” he said. “Thanks to Rev. O’Donnell’s intervention, our firefighters and first responders are able to continue serving our community.”

R.H. Reny Inc. and the Reny family supports fire departments in “many communities” through donations and the use of its facilities for trainings, such as emergency vehicle operations classes and pump classes.

Skip Cahill Tire in Edgecomb donates to Edgecomb Fire Department fundraisers, allows the department to charge gas for its trucks to an account, and provides service for its smaller trucks.

This spring, Edgecomb firefighters traveled to Ohio to pick up a replacement brush truck. While driving the truck back to Edgecomb, the driver’s-side front tire failed, damaging the truck.

Skip Cahill Tire owner Dave Cahill provided advice and assistance, and helped determine that the truck’s tires had been recalled and the tire manufacturer had gone out of business.

“This generosity and knowledge allowed the brush truck to get to Maine safely without any other issues, and we were able to get the truck into service as soon as it was in town,” Edgecomb Fire Chief Roy Potter said in his nomination.

“Considering how dry this past spring was, this was a huge relief to our department.”

The Lincoln County Fire Chiefs Association’s Community Merit Award “recognizes an individual or business who provides either emergency or non-emergency aid to the fire service or citizens during an emergency, or assists an emergency services agency in accomplishing their goal of public safety.”