

First Responders Honored for Service

By Sheldon S. Shafer

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A non-profit, public-safety support organization yesterday honored Louisville Metro Police, Fire & Rescue and Emergency Medical Services personnel for efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

The annual awards were presented on behalf of the Bluecoats of Louisville at a luncheon at the Bristol Bar & Grille on Main Street. Police Chief Robert White, Fire Chief Greg Frederick and the EMS director, Dr. Neal Richmond, selected the honorees and presided at the ceremony.

The Bluecoats, founded in 1956, provides donated and invested funds to assist the families of public-safety workers killed or injured in the line of duty.

Mac McClure, president of the Bluecoats, said the agency provides a \$2,500 stipend to each of the three metro departments for the individual selected, a sum that is divided if more than one employee is honored.

White introduced Sgt. Alejandro T. Cabrera, a day- shift platoon supervisor in the 8th Division in eastern Jefferson County. White called the selection "a very, very easy choice," praising Cabrera for his community-outreach efforts, especially with children. "He goes beyond what is expected. ... He does the right thing. He is a great police officer and a good person," White said of Cabrera.

Frederick honored Capt. Thomas Snyder, Sgts. Dwayne Martin and Larry Welcher and Firefighter Benjamin Vardeman. They responded to a house fire in eastern Louisville on Sept. 16. When they arrived they were told that a woman was inside the structure, which was engulfed in flames.

Frederick said the four men entered the building, rescued and resuscitated the woman, who was taken to the hospital and later recovered.

Richmond selected five employees for recognition. He called them outstanding employees who do wonderful work.

The EMS honorees were: Paramedic Suzanne Bernert, director of the community CPR training center; Majors Mike Will and Rick Robbins, who are in charge of a training-education academy for staff EMTs; and Lt. Jeff Kirby and Sgt. Richard Warren, who are lead instructors in department field training activities.

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