

Subject: Fwd: American Legion Award

March 8, 2012

The definition of the word Firefighter, according to Webster's Dictionary, is a person who fights fire. While this is true, the actual job entails so much more. A firefighter's job includes tasks that vary from rescuing a cat in a tree to cutting a family of four out of a mangled vehicle to doing CPR on a newborn baby. Every day is unique and full of unexpected events. Because of this, firefighters must be trained to be well rounded individuals capable of handling a wide range of situations. While many on our staff are deserving of recognition for the jobs that they do, one firefighter stood out for his actions that took place at a call in early July. This firefighter attended and graduated the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute Academy where he became certified in Hazardous Materials Awareness, Hazardous Materials Operations, Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and Driver Operator. He then was hired on with the St. John Parish Office of Fire Services in the Spring of 2010 as a Firefighter/Operator. This firefighter then went on to receive further training and became certified as a Hazardous Materials Technician. He is also currently enrolled in Delgado Community College where he is taking an Emergency Medical Technician- Basic class where he hopes to become a licensed EMT-Basic. All of these certifications help to make a good, well rounded firefighter. This training was particularly important at a call we received on a warm July evening in 2011. Fire department units were dispatched to a report of a house on fire in the sugar ridge area. The first units arrived and reported that we had a single family home with a fire in an attached garage. Initial reports stated that it was believed that everyone was out of the residence except for the family dog. At the same time, there was a crew extinguishing the fire as another crew made entry in order to complete a search of the smoke-filled residence. Firefighters Blake Estevez, Michael Heath and Ted Bourg all entered the home and began a search. Firefighter Bourg was able to locate the family dog in one part of the home while Firefighters Heath and Estevez continued the search. Firefighter Heath stepped into one bedroom to check for occupants while Firefighter Estevez checked another bedroom. This is where Firefighter Estevez located a young girl laying on a bed wrapped up in a blanket. He called to his partner and made his way to the young girl where he picked her up and carried her out of the residence and reunited her with the rest of her family. This was all chalked up as "just a part of the job". We continued the call as usual and prepared ourselves and our equipment for the next assignment. Firefighters never seem to look at themselves as heroes, although the actions that they sometimes take are very heroic. Firefighters do not do the job for the recognition or the fame or the money. The drive to help someone in their time of need is what keeps a firefighter going. Everyone involved with the call that July day did their part to make that call successful. It was just Firefighter Blake Estevez's day to do a little something more. We all continue to prepare ourselves so that when our day to do a little something more presents itself, we will be ready and able to get the job done.

Spencer Chauvin
District Chief - St. John Parish Office of Fire Services
1801 West Airline Hwy., Laplace, LA 70068
(504)628-8540
s.chauvin@sjbparish.com
sjfd100@aol.com