



SALEM FIRE-EMS NEWS RELEASE

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SALEM FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT SWIFTWATER TEAM RECEIVE HIGGINS & LANGLEY MEMORIAL AWARD

The Salem Fire & EMS Department and the Roanoke Fire & EMS Department's Swiftwater Rescue Teams recently received the prestigious Higgins & Langley Swiftwater Rescue Incident Award. The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards, honor outstanding achievement in the technical rescue discipline of Swiftwater and flood rescue, and this is the second time the Salem Fire & EMS Department has received this honor. In 2003, the department received the Swiftwater Rescue Team Award for rescuing 19 people in severe flooding on the Roanoke River.

The selection for this year's award was based on the rescue of more than 50 people who were in imminent danger during unprecedented flash flooding in the Roanoke Valley on July 3 and July 10 of 2013. As floodwaters rose quickly in the area, Swiftwater rescue teams responded to multiple, simultaneous rescue missions, including 21 children in a daycare center, a badly injured motorist, a bedridden hospice patient whose room was flooded, and other groups of citizens and individuals trapped in vehicles and inside buildings. Captain Tim Graham, Lieutenant Mike Elston, Senior Firefighter James Burke and Firefighter Jason Morris responded to the incidents and have received a certificate and award ribbon for their selfless actions.

The awards were presented on Friday, June 6, at the annual National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) conference in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. Representatives from both the Salem Fire & EMS Department and the Roanoke Fire & EMS Department were there to receive the awards.

These awards are presented to Swiftwater and flood rescue experts worldwide in several significant categories, including the Outstanding Achievement Award, Program Development Award, Special Commendation Award, and Swiftwater Incident Award.

The Higgins & Langley Memorial Awards were established in 1993 by the National Association of Search and Rescue Swiftwater Committee in honor of Earl Higgins, a writer and filmmaker, who lost his life in 1980 while rescuing a child who was swept down the flood-swollen Los Angeles River, and Los Angeles County Firefighter Jeffrey Langley, a pioneer in Swiftwater rescue, who lost his life in a helicopter incident in 1993.

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