

MSFCA Public Education Awards

Firefighter Recognition Awards:

Sue Bergeron has been a fire inspector and public educator for the Saint Paul Fire Department since 1984. Sue retired at the end of September, 2010, after 26 years of dedicated and professional service to the community. Sue's hard work and commitment to fire and life safety through public education have been instrumental in the significant reduction in fire deaths in Saint Paul, from a 10-year average of 4 fatalities a year in 1984 to zero fire deaths in 2009 making that the safest year from fire since records were kept over 60 years ago. This also contributed to Minnesota's record-low fatality rate as well. Sue and Public Education Officer Paula Peterson developed the highly successful "Footsteps to Fire Safety" program in 1988 after Saint Paul experienced eight tragic fire deaths that were the result of child-set fires over the previous two years. In the 22 years since the development of "Footsteps", there has been just ONE fatal child-set fire in St. Paul! Sue was always willing to share her knowledge and expertise with others so they could make a difference in their community. She left St. Paul and Minnesota safer than when she joined. We are all the better for her extraordinary efforts.

St. Paul Investigator, **Jamie Novak** is an individual whose name is synonymous with arson. Investigator Novak has a state and national reputation for unbridled passion for fire prevention with a strong focus on fire cause and origin investigations and putting a halt to the horrific crime of arson.

Jamie's contributions and accomplishments span more than two decades of service. At a time when some folks might be winding down in their careers, he seems to be winding up! In the past two years, Jamie has pursued the funding, construction, and implementation of a kitchen fire burn simulator trailer that he has personally staffed at numerous functions around the state.

In addition to this effort he continues his passionate work in the IAAI recently completing a Burn to Learn program and being the Lead Evaluator for the Minnesota Fire Certification Board Fire Investigator Test which just completed its 3rd offering of this exam. Both the Burn to Learn and each of the Investigator tests are major undertakings and consume significant time and energy.

Lieutenant **Shelby Wolf** of West Metro Fire began her career in the fire service at 13 as a fire explorer. She has continued to do great things since this humble beginning. Along with Shelby's duties on the fire ground in the West Metro Fire District, she is responsible for inspections, plan review, investigations and developing West Metro's fire safety and prevention programming. She plans, organizes and coordinates these events as well.

Shelby was instrumental in starting the Minnesota Prevention Group. The main focus of this group is to brainstorm ways to teach prevention, find and share resources and mentor those new to the prevention world. Shelby continually looks for ways to make things easier for others and to get prevention messages to the public. Shelby approaches everything she does with passion and commitment.

Community Partner: Lakeville Government Television

Taber Akin, Jim Schiffman, and Tim Klausler work as a team to produce “Lakeville Fire Department On Call”. Each show is about thirty minutes and features: a selected main topic, the Chief’s Corner, Ask Taber, a Did You Know? segment, Scratch the Fire Dog, and Consumer Safety Checklist which highlights product recalls.

Taber Akin and Tim Klausler brainstorm story ideas, line up guests and firefighters for each show. Video Producer, Tim Klausler films the show and edits the footage into a finished product. Jim Schiffman, the puppeteer, brings “Scratch the Fire Dog” to life for the children teaching about fire safety. Jim and Tim both work for Lakeville Government Television and Taber Akin works as a Principal in an elementary school and as a paid on call Firefighter/Engineer for Lakeville Fire Department. The team produces six shows a year which can be viewed from the City of Lakeville website.

Community/Civilian Recognition

This year’s recipient of the Minnesota Fire Chiefs Public Education Award presented to a non-firefighter is arguably responsible for saving more lives and property than the combined forces of the entire fire service. **Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry Tom Joachim** is responsible for the code adoption process in the State of Minnesota. This includes the Building Code, Fire Code, Residential Code, Plumbing Code, Mechanical Code and Energy Code.

Simply put, code provisions save lives, firefighter lives, occupant lives, and visitor lives. Commissioner Joachim exemplifies fair and impartial code adoption processes and has demonstrated an exemplary level of assuring all codes receive the examination and deliberation by all stakeholders necessary to assure the balance between public safety and other interests are met.

Additionally, Commissioner Joachim entered into a formal memo of understanding with the State Fire Marshal’s Office specific to the adoption of the Fire Code. This memo represents a clear understanding by the Commissioner that the Fire Service places enormous importance on the Fire Code and takes serious ownership in the adoption process.