

Sisters firefighters/EMTs honored

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Fire Chief Roger Johnson handed out a bevy of awards at last week's Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District awards banquet, held at FivePine Lodge & Conference Center on Friday evening, March 2.

The awards offer a window into the degree of dedication that exists within the local District — from student firefighters to volunteers to career firefighters and EMTs. They also reveal a tight-knit crew that truly meets the definition of a word that was used often through the evening: "family."

One of the most extraordinary moments of the evening came with the Life-Saving Award. In this case, the life saved was one of their own: Captain Thornton Brown, who was injured in a climbing accident in California last year (see "Fire captain on other end of rescue," *The Nugget*, April 26, 2017 — link available with online version of this story).

Fire medic Matt Millar and Captain Jeff Liming applied their professional knowledge and cool under pressure to ensure a positive outcome when Brown lost control of his rappel on a descent into a canyon, smashing his heels when he came to an abrupt and painful stop.

Brown recounted the adventure at the banquet, showing a video of his rescue by helicopter out of the bottom of the canyon. After a

long rehab, Brown returned to full duty.

"I'd like to thank publicly Jeff and Matt for all they did," Brown told the assemblage. "I couldn't have better brothers within the fire service — or anywhere."

Dave Moyer was recognized for an extraordinary 45 years of service as a volunteer. Moyer, who lives across the street from the fire hall, was often the first man on an engine back in the pioneering days of the Sisters fire serve, and he's stuck with it through to the creation of the professionally staffed, well-equipped service it is today.

Jeff Liming was named Volunteer of the Year, and he invoked the sensibility that was so often expressed in the room: "Thank you for letting me be part of your family."

Rachelle Bieler received both the Rookie of the Year Award and Resident Volunteer of the Year honors, reflecting her passion for the fire service, her dedication to training and education and her extraordinary level of participation in the District's multitude of community service projects and events.

Christi Davis was honored for firefighter fitness, and Larry Stuker was honored as Fire Corps Volunteer of the Year for his efforts in distributing automatic external defibrillators through the District.

Though his tone in presenting the award was humorous, what Chief Johnson noted is a fact: "Sisters is one of the safest places to have a

heart attack today in America — thanks to Larry!"

The Fire Corps as a whole received the Chief's Award for Excellence for their outreach work in the community, which includes smoke-alarm installation, blood pressure clinics and more.

Noting that 75 to 80 percent of the District's calls are for medical assistance, Chief Johnson presented the EMT of the Year Award to Rita Hodge for her exceptional dedication to providing life-saving service under pressure.

Travis Bootes deployed twice to California as part of Oregon strike teams sent to aid in the battle against catastrophic wildfires in that state. His dedication earned him honors as Volunteer Firefighter of the Year. Cody



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Captain Thornton Brown thanked Jeff Liming and Matt Millar (not pictured) for helping him get through a climbing accident last year.

Meredith was recognized for his leadership and continuing efforts and example that make everyone around him better, as Career Firefighter of the Year.

While the individuals singled out for honors clearly earned the recognition — which comes from their peers — they are all quick to

recognize that they are part of a team — indeed, a family.

Keynote speaker State Fire Marshal Jim Walker noted that one of the distinguishing qualities of the personnel of the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District is their humility.

"They do incredible things," he said. "And they do it on a daily basis."

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"We see improvement every day," said Smith.

The first of the Outlaws scheduled 23 games is a non-league game versus La Pine on March 15. Other pre-league opponents include Crook County (4A state runner-up in 2017), Klamath Union, Jefferson and Gladstone. The Outlaws will also host a tournament during spring break.

Sky-Em League action opens April 3 against Elmira.

This will be the Outlaws' final year as a member of the Sky-Em along with Elmira, Sutherlin, Sweet Home, Cottage Grove and Junction City. Due to OSAA realignment starting in fall 2018, in spring 2019 they will compete in the Oregon West League: Newport, Philomath, Sisters, Stayton, Sweet Home and Woodburn.

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