



Missouri Department of Public Safety

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Nixon honors seven Missouri firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2008

Commends commitment of firefighters, paramedics and their families

JEFFERSON CITY -- Gov. Jay Nixon today participated in a solemn ceremony in the Missouri Capitol honoring the seven Missouri firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2008. State Fire Marshal Randy Cole said that is the largest number of firefighter and paramedic deaths he can recall in a single year in the State. Gov. Nixon said, "These men represented the diversity of Missouri's firefighters. They came from small towns, the suburbs, and our largest cities. Some had been firefighters for decades; others were only beginning their lives of service protecting the public."

Two of last year's fallen firefighters were fatally shot while they were answering the call to duty. 22-year-old Ryan Hummert of the Maplewood Fire Department was responding to a vehicle fire. As he exited his fire truck, he was shot by a gunman in a house nearby. 52-year-old Leonard Riggins of the St. Louis Fire Department was still in uniform and in his official vehicle on his way home when he witnessed a vehicle accident. He stopped to assist and as he approached the vehicle the occupant fatally shot Riggins in the chest.

Gov. Nixon said the sacrifice of the fallen firefighters' families' should also be honored and remembered and he praised the firefighters gathered from across Missouri. "This ceremony stands as a reminder that in every decade and every generation, there are those who take on the responsibility for the safety of society -- quietly and without fanfare, they face danger every day to protect us," he said.

Here are the Missouri firefighters/paramedics who made the ultimate sacrifice in 2008:

- Firefighter/Paramedic Louis P. Berra, age 49 (career) – West County EMS/Fire Protection: January 18, 2008 (He was found deceased on the morning of Jan. 18th in the bedroom of his duty station firehouse. His death is suspected to be cardiac related.)**
- Firefighter Terrance Dale Crockett, age 48 (career) – Kansas City Fire Department: March 17, 2008 (He collapsed while on a hose line at a residential structure fire during overhaul operations. The fire was ruled as a set fire and the investigation is still open.)**
- Firefighter Ricky Stephens Morris, age 54 (career) – Sedalia Fire Department: April 17, 2008 (He was seriously burned during fire suppression efforts at a residential structure fire. He succumbed to his injuries after more than a week in the hospital.)**
- Firefighter Tyler Heath Casey, age 21 (volunteer) – Seneca Area Fire Protection: May 12, 2008 (He**



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was injured when a tornado struck while he was warning citizens in the area to get to safety.)

Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Hummert, age 22 (career) – Maplewood City Fire Department: July 21, 2008 (He responded to a vehicle fire and as he exited his fire truck he was fatally shot by a gunman inside a nearby residence. Two police officers also were shot by the gunman and survived.)

Firefighter Leonard Riggins, age 52 (career) – St. Louis Fire Department: November 5, 2008 (While in his fire department uniform and in official vehicle on his way home, he witnessed a vehicle accident. He stopped to render assistance and as he approached the vehicle the occupant fatally shot him in the chest. The suspect was eventually killed in shootout with police.)

Lt. Clarence E. Watson II, age 35 (paid staff position) – Hematite Fire Protection District: November 29, 2008 (Collapsed at his home after he had responded to three emergency calls during his previous shift.)