

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
Governor

JOHN M. BRITT
Director

RANDY L. COLE
State Fire Marshal



2401 E. McCarty Street
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 844
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0844
Telephone: (573) 751-2930
E-Mail: firesafe@dps.dps.mo.gov
Website: www.dps.dps.mo.gov

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

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Seven Fallen Missouri Firefighters to Be Honored at National Memorial

The names of seven Missouri firefighters who died in the line of duty during 2008 will be added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial on the weekend of October 2-4, 2009. Only four states lost more firefighters in the line of duty than Missouri did last year.

October 2-4 is the 28th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and will be observed by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration. A plaque with the names of 103 firefighters from across the U.S. who died in the line of duty in 2008 will be added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial, located on the National Fire Academy campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The Missouri firefighters who died in the line of duty during 2008 are:

- Louis P. Berra - West County EMS & Fire Protection District – January 18, 2008
- Tyler H. Casey - Seneca Area Fire Protection District – May 12, 2008
- Terrance Dale Crockett - Kansas City Fire Department – March 17, 2008
- Ryan A. Hummert – Maplewood Fire Department – July 21, 2008
- Rickey S. Morris - Sedalia Fire Department – April 17, 2008
- Leonard Riggins Sr. - St. Louis Fire Department – November 5, 2008
- Clarence O. Watson II - Hematite Fire Protection District – November 29, 2008

Missouri's suffered more line-of-duty deaths last year than all states but Oregon (9), North Carolina (9), Pennsylvania (8) and New York (8).

Fire Marshal Randy Cole said, "This is another reminder of the dangers firefighters face every day. Each time they answer the call to service they are selflessly placing their lives on the line to protect their neighbors and fellow Missourians. In Missouri, approximately 75 percent of firefighters are unpaid volunteers. We should honor all those we lost last year and the families and loved ones they left behind. And we should keep in mind the more than 20,000 firefighters in Missouri who protect us every day."

On April 8, Gov. Jay Nixon and firefighters from across the state honored the seven fallen Missouri firefighters from 2008 in Jefferson City in a solemn ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda. Fire Marshal Cole said he could not remember a deadlier year for Missouri firefighters.

Here's more on the Missouri firefighters who died:

Firefighter/Paramedic Louis P. Berra, age 49 (career) – West County EMS/Fire Protection: January 18, 2008
(Louis was found deceased on the morning of January 18th in the bedroom of his duty station firehouse.)

Firefighter Terrance Dale Crockett, age 48 (career) – Kansas City Fire Department: March 17, 2008
(Terrance collapsed while operating a hose line at a residential structure fire during overhaul operations.)

Firefighter Ricky Stephens Morris, age 54 (career) – Sedalia Fire Department: April 17, 2008 (Ricky 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 (Tyler was critically 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
(Ryan 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 from shift, he witnessed a vehicle accident. Leonard 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
(Clarence collapsed at his home after he had responded to three emergency calls during his previous shift.)

