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Long term fireman, dispatcher among award honorees

Two men who have each served Hoopeston for more than two decades were among those honored Saturday at the 2015 Hoopeston Community Awards banquet.



CRABTREE

Cliff Crabtree, who retired last year as fire chief, and former 911 coordinator Russell Rudd, who recently resigned after 28 years, were just two people honored at the event, sponsored by Hoopeston Jaycees, Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce, The Chronicle and Save the Lorraine Foundation.

Crabtree, who joined the department in April 1991 at the urging of his friend, Jim Pajor, was named Firefighter of the Year. In accepting the award, Crabtree talked about his years of service, saying he quit the department about midway through his years of service following a trailer fire in which two small children died.

Crabtree, who had small children of his own at the time, found the bodies. "I was done," he said. "I couldn't do this."

He rejoined after talking to former fireman Rodney Jackson, while riding around in Jackson's truck. Jackson asked Crabtree "if you get off this department, who's going to be the next food to run into a burning building?"

Crabtree went back to fighting fires, but after the June 19, 2013 fire at the tire recycling facility, Crabtree said the passion was gone and he realized it was time to step down. He retired in August 2014.

Rudd started his career with the police department as a dispatcher, a position Chief Mark Drollinger called "the front line" of the department. He was involved in Hoopeston's 911 upgrade and became the city's 911 coordinator.

In accepting his award, Rudd, who started the new year with a new job, as deputy director of Vermilion County Emergency Management Agency, praised his colleagues on the fire and police departments, saying the people of Hoopeston are very lucky to have such dedicated people.



RUDD

Other Jaycee awards and those who received them include:
 EMA Volunteer of the Year: Russ Hibma, who was unable to accept his award because he is recovering from lung surgery.

Rookie of the Year: Samantha Pugh
 Associate of the Year: Brett Rush
 Jaycee of the Year: Matthew Lithgow
 Presidential Achievement Award: Callie Huffman
 2015 Festival Chairman: Kenny Byerly

Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce president Valarie Hinkle presented several awards, including:

Community Service Award: Hoopeston Multi Agency
 Retailer of the Year: Todd Rush/Sheridan's TV & Appliances

See AWARDS on other side

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Winners honored at Saturday evening's Community Awards Banquet include front, Betty Richards; middle row, Susan Redden, Jeanne Shore, Multi Agency executive director Maria Sermersheim, Miss Hoopeston Aly Nicholls, Jim Richards, Samantha Pew, Jaycee president Jeramy Dobkins, and Kenny Byerly; and back, Bill Nicholls, Fred Zemke, Arturo Rebollo, Cliff Crabtree, Todd Rush, Brett Rush, Matthew Lithgow and Callie Huffman.

Awards continued from other side

Food Service of the Year: Arturo Rebollo/La Casa del Sol

Business of the Year: Community Bank

Two men were named co-winners of the Chronicle's Citizen of the Year Award. Fred Zemke and Tom Sweeney were both honored for their contributions to Hoopeston.

Save the Lorraine Foundation sponsored their first award at this year's banquet. Its Outstanding Service Award was given to Jim and Betty Richards for their work with the group.

New Books at the Library

Non-Fiction

You Can, You Will: 8 Undeniable Qualities of a Winner by Joel Osteen

Living the Quaker Way by Philip Gulley

Vanishing Grace: What Ever Happened to the Good

Weather

Chance of snow today. High 16. Tonight, mostly cloudy. Low 9. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of snow late. High 30, low 25.

News by Philip Yancey

Obituaries

RUSH - Dale Leon Rush, 78, of Wellington, died at 3:15 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015, at Heritage Health, Hoopeston. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. Tuesday at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at the funeral home. Cremation rites will follow. Burial will be at a later date with military rites by Hoopeston American Legion and VFW posts.