



Georgetown County, South Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Midway Fire Rescue to receive international Heart Safe Community Award

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — Midway Fire Rescue was announced on March 9 as a recipient of this year's Heart Safe Community Award, presented by the International Association of Fire Chiefs' EMS section. The award is presented to only two communities annually — one large and one small. Midway won the award for small communities (those with populations under 100,000).

The award recognizes fire-service-based EMS and other EMS systems that have used creative approaches to implement or maintain public access defibrillation programs within the communities they serve. From 2001-2005, the award considered the establishment of Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) programs by fire and EMS agencies in their communities. In 2005, the award criteria were expanded to reflect the 2005 American Heart Association Guidelines. Now, agencies applying for the award must show how they have also improved the quality of out-of-hospital resuscitation through bystander CPR, AED deployment, advanced notification to the receiving hospital, and other continuous quality resuscitation improvements.

Midway Fire Rescue has implemented a variety of programs to improve its emergency medical service. Midway provides service to a diverse community consisting of year-round and seasonal residents, as well as tourists. Public outreach efforts have allowed the agency to reach nearly 5,000 people, as well as expand the emergency medical training offered to all Midway Fire Rescue personnel.

Midway also completed an aggressive push to:

- Update its equipment, including the purchase of new LifePak monitors,
- Improve communications with the community's hospital system; and
- Decrease "door-to-balloon time" — the interval between when a heart attack patient arrives at the hospital and the time he/she receives percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), such as angioplasty.

"This is an incredible honor," said Midway Chief Doug Eggiman. "We've had state honors before and different things like that, but to actually win something on an international level like this, it's kind of stunning."

It also says a lot about the community as a whole, Eggiman said. "We're really blessed in the sense that we have wonderful people here who are proactive and aggressive in doing things

to make our community safer. We're also very lucky to have a supportive administrator and County Council that allows us to get the equipment and policies we need to have in place to do what we do. They also helped earn this award, as did the community and the hospitals that receive our patients. We're very much a team and every member of this team is key and played a part in our receiving this award."

Midway's efforts have succeeded in improving survivability rates of patients throughout the community and the department should be lauded not just for this most recent recognition, but for their efforts every day to save lives and create a safer community for residents in Georgetown County.

Albuquerque Fire Department is this year's other Heart Safe Community Award recipient.

"The Heart Safe Community awards recognize the Albuquerque Fire Department and the Midway Fire Rescue Department for their dedication and work to promote a better and safer community," said David Becker, chair of the International Association of Fire Chiefs' EMS section. "They demonstrate and serve as role models for other communities to follow in protecting their citizens through their programs."

Presentation of the award will be made at the 2015 Fire-Rescue Med conference in Nevada March 23-25.

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