

March 26, 2012

Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

Four Burleson firefighters as well as a Crowley firefighter were honored with the Valor Award by the Texas Fire Chiefs Association for the role they played in the August 2011 high angle rescue of a cell tower worker.

Burleson Fire Chief Gary Wisdom nominated Burleson firefighters Dallas Fowler, Bill Buchanan and Matt Moseley and Fire Lt. Jeremiah Lozier as well as Crowley firefighter Gary Sansing. The Texas Fire Chiefs Association recognizes Texas firefighters who have placed themselves in mortal danger to save a human life. Midland Fire Chief Isbell, president of the Texas Fire Chiefs Association, presented the award on March 14 at the Southwest Fire Rescue Conference hosted by Frisco.

The rescue that triggered the award started at 7:48 p.m. on Aug. 3. The Burleson Fire Department responded to a mutual aid request from the Mid-North Volunteer Fire Department. A communication tower worker was trapped approximately 700 feet in the air. Burleson called the Crowley Fire Department for assistance. The temperature was more than 105 degrees.

Three workers had been on the tower all day replacing equipment. When they finished, they started the descent, but one of the workers did not head down.

Lt. Lozier handled operations for the incident and coordinated the rescue. Firefighter Fowler was the first up the tower with a medical bag (water, IV fluids and first aid supplies). The plan was to get the stranded worker hydrated, then help him climb down the tower.

It took Firefighter Fowler approximately one hour to get to the patient. When he reached him, the worker had undone his safety harness and was lying on a platform that was approximately six feet away from the tower. The worker was in and out of consciousness. The platform the worker was on was approximately 3-feet by 3-feet and the sides were unprotected. The worker was approximately 6-foot-5-inches tall and 250 pounds.

The incident changed from a simple rescue to a full rescue. Firefighters Buchanan and Moseley started the climb, towing a three-point anchor system and approximately 1,500 feet of rope. By the time they reached the patient, Firefighter Fowler had tossed the patient an IV bag and, on the advice of the medical director, the worker drank the IV fluids. After hydrating, the worker was

able to put his safety harness back on and helped the firefighters get him back inside the tower.

The firefighters constructed a three-point anchor and pulley system inside the tower and lowered the rope to the bottom where firefighters constructed a belay system. The three firefighters and the worker were all inside the tower as they started the descent.

Crowley Firefighter Sansing climbed approximately one-third of the way up the tower to keep all of the equipment and rope from tangling as the three rescuers and the worker started down. The stranded worker's feet touched ground at 2:30 a.m., seven hours after the rescue began.

The rescuers not only successfully rescued a stranded worker, but they also battled the triple digit heat, dehydration, cramping, and a very strong wind.

"I nominated these firefighters for this award because they demonstrated valor, determination, and unmatched courage during this incident," Fire Chief Wisdom said. "They used the training that they had learned and dealt with a very difficult situation and saw it to a successful end. They were all well deserving of this award and they are all heroes."