Governor’s Public Safety Awards

Dedicated to the men and women of the Georgia public safety community in recognition of their Acts of Heroism, Outstanding Deeds and Exemplary Performance that enhances their profession.

Honorable Nathan Deal, Governor of the State of Georgia
GEORGIA PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER
December 12, 2013
Greetings:

We are here to recognize the courageous efforts of Georgia’s public safety community who are committed to achieve our most basic expectation of government: to keep our neighborhoods and communities safe.

Georgia’s public safety professionals protect us from fire, crime and chaos. They are leaders in our communities during times of crisis. They guard us against international and domestic terrorists. They defend our children from being victimized by sexual predators.

Where you find commitment, you will also find sacrifice. As you review the backgrounds and accounts of this year’s award recipients, I hope you will note the dedication and courage each have exhibited through acts of heroism and outstanding contributions to their professions.

It is a privilege for me to pay tribute to these public safety professionals. Each of them is individually reflective of Georgia’s most admirable virtues.

Sincerely,

Nathan Deal
2013 Governor’s
Public Safety Awards Ceremony

December 12, 2013
4:00 p.m.

Welcome
Tim Bearden
Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
Dr. Rick Lanford
Senior Chaplain for Homeland Security

Introduction of the Governor
Tim Bearden

Keynote Address
Honorable Nathan Deal
Governor of the State of Georgia

Award Honorees Presentation
Honorable Nathan Deal
Narration: Randy Travis, Fox 5 News

Dedication Prayer
Dr. Rick Lanford
Act of Heroism

**Nick Boney, Jeff Johnston, Bryan Reavis and Jason Teague**
Gwinnett County Police Department

On April 10, 2013, Gwinnett County Fire Department Station 10 personnel were dispatched to a medical call in Suwanee. Upon arriving at the scene they entered the residence and began their assessment of the male patient, later identified as Lauren Brown, who was lying in his bed and complaining of chest pains. Suddenly, and without warning, Brown produced a handgun, pointed it at the firemen and took them hostage.

Gwinnett County S.W.A.T. personnel were dispatched and arrived on the scene quickly. Three team members, Sgt. Jason Teague, Sgt. Jeff Johnston and PO Senior Nick Boney covertly entered the home and executed a plan to rescue the firefighters. Teague was injured as he and the suspect exchanged gunfire. Sgt. Bryan Reavis joined the rescue and quickly assisted in controlling the situation. The gunman was fatally wounded and all four hostages were rescued.

Act of Heroism

**David Brady and Chris Hodge**
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

On Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at approximately 1630 hours, Sgt. Chris Hodge and RFC David Brady responded to a call of a boating incident with injured and trapped occupants in Manhead Sound near St. Simon’s Island. The officers arrived on the scene within minutes and met with a United States Coast Guard crew. As Hodge maneuvered the patrol vessel into the scene, Brady made his way to the bow to survey the situation, while two Coast Guard officers attempted to lift the vessel off of an injured subject who was trapped face down in the marsh beneath the gunwale of the vessel.

The officers worked quickly, realizing that the incoming tide would submerge the victim in the next few minutes. Hodge instructed the operator of the Coast Guard boat to get the wench line out so officers could attempt to hook to a cleat on the overturned vessel. While Hodge was rigging the line to the cleat, Brady talked to the injured subject to further assess his injuries. Hodge was able to dig into the mud and rig a line that officers could use to move the vessel. Hodge then instructed the Coast Guard boat to begin to pull on the line while Brady held on to the injured subject. When the overturned boat began to slide, Brady was able to pull the injured subject from beneath the boat. Soon after extricating him, the subject began to go into shock. Officers quickly loaded him into the DNR patrol boat and took him to the ramp at McKay River where officers and EMS secured the victim. While he suffered trauma and second degree burns from leaking fuel, the victim lived thanks to the quick and decisive actions of Hodge and Brady.
Act of Heroism

James Kevin Buice, Jeb Bryan Krause, Brandon Jay Porter and Jesse Emilio Verdejo
Gwinnett County Fire & Emergency Services

On February 4, 2013 Engine 23 and Engine 2 were the first on scene of a residential structure fire with a possible entrapment. Upon arrival, the home was showing heavy smoke with fire emanating from the garage. Crews met with complainant, who stated that her husband was still inside the residence and refused to come out. Engine 2 and Engine 23 made entry through the front door with a 1 ¾ hand-line for an offensive fire attack with rescue as the priority.

Once inside the residence, crews were met with heavy smoke banked down to the floor and moderate to heavy heat conditions. The victim was lying face down on a couch directly adjacent to the garage, where the seat of the fire was located. Fire was rolling across the ceiling of the hot and pitch-black room as Lieutenant Kevin Buice, Firefighter Jeb Krause, and Firefighter Brandon Porter removed the victim from the burning building via a glass sliding door that had been ventilated during the search and rescue efforts. Firefighter Jesse Verdejo remained on the single hose-line to keep the fire in check and to provide protection for his teammates as they returned to safety.

Act of Heroism

Robert Mark Carson and Quenton William Martin
Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Brunswick Police Department

On June 4, 2013 at approximately 2:10 p.m., Sgt. Robert Mark Carson responded to an urgent call that there was a man on the Sidney Lanier Bridge who appeared to be attempting suicide. While responding to the subject, Carson radioed GSP Brunswick and asked for assistance from the Brunswick Police Department. Upon locating the subject who was sitting on the barrier on the north side of the bridge, Carson approached him and began to engage him in conversation. The subject refused to come back across the barrier.

Brunswick Police Department Officer Quenton William Martin arrived and also began to engage the subject in conversation. Both Martin and Carson were positioned about 8 feet from the edge of the bridge. Martin offered to call the subject’s mother and attempted to coerce him into coming across the barrier. When the subject turned toward the water, Martin grabbed him, and Carson grabbed Martin. The subject fell back into the road, dragging them to safety. After handcuffing the subject, he was checked by EMS and placed on 72 hour suicide watch.
Act of Heroism

James Timothy Cassada, Elzaver Dustin Davis, Carlton Christopher Evans and Brian Keith Scott
Glynn County Police Department

Lieutenant Brian Scott and Officers Dustin Davis, J.T. Cassada and Carl Evans exceeded their normal police duties when they responded to a severe head-on collision on Altama Connector caused by a reckless driver who crossed the centerline. The impact trapped the driver, Dario O’Conner, in the driver’s seat and also caused the vehicle to quickly catch fire in the engine compartment.

The fire quickly engulfed the engine compartment and entered the passenger compartment where O’Conner was trapped, which caused him severe injury and posed an imminent threat to his life.

Scott, Davis, Cassada and Evans put their lives at great risk as they entered the burning vehicle where flames were burning O’Conner’s legs, upper torso, and reaching his face. The officers were able to cut the seat belt, but were unable to pull O’Conner from the burning vehicle because his feet and legs were pinned from the crushed dashboard. The officers nonetheless continued their effort to save O’Conner, remaining with him and suppressing the fire until the fire department arrived. The officers’ efforts saved O’Conner’s life, reduced further injury, and bought the valuable time needed for the fire department to arrive, extinguish the fire, and extricate O’Conner.

Act of Heroism

Kelvin Hawkins
State Board of Pardons and Paroles

On December 11, 2012, Chief Parole Officer (CPO) Kelvin Hawkins was in the field conducting Board business when he observed Albany Police Officer Waquzana Miles and Sgt. Konetta Tyler trying to prevent a man from committing suicide. The man was threatening to jump from the Blaylock overpass onto US 19 into oncoming traffic. Chief Hawkins stopped to assist the two officers with their efforts. CPO Hawkins spoke encouragement to the man, ensuring him that suicide was not his only option and offering help to the man if he would not jump. Chief Hawkins physically assisted the APD officers by pulling the man to safety. Once the three officers had him away from the bridge, he was escorted to a waiting ambulance and transported away from the scene where he could receive help as CPO Kelvin Hawkins had promised.
**Act of Heroism**

**John Micheal Crawley**  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement

On March 29, 2013, at around 8:30 p.m., off-duty CPL Micheal Crawley received a call from Sgt. Max Boswell in reference to four individuals that were lost on the Ogeechee River near Davisboro, Georgia. Crawley called on local farmer, Justin Tanner, who is familiar with the river area for valuable assistance.

After locating the hunters through call-and-response, Tanner and Crawley made their way towards hunters in the chilled water that reached waist deep covering close to a mile before reaching the river banks. The hunters were instructed to leave their boat and come to the sound of Crawley’s voice.

When visual contact was made with the subjects, Crawley instructed the hunters to remove their heavy clothing and put on personal flotation devices to swim across the river. Andrew Lopez was the first in the river. The cold water and swift current overtook him, and he panicked. Without regard to his own safety, Crawley dove into the river to rescue Lopez. Crawley located Lopez, who had slipped from his PFD, and immediately dove under the water, grabbed Lopez and brought him to the surface. Crawley asked the other hunters to make a human chain to assist him in getting all of them to the bank. With the risk of hypothermia affecting all five of the men, Crawley built a fire, keeping everyone warm until an extraction of the men was made at daybreak.

**Act of Heroism**

**Joshua Hedden**  
Georgia Department of Public Safety

On April 9, 2013, around 10:30 p.m., Trooper Joshua Hedden was traveling north on GA 9 in Lumpkin County, when he observed two vehicles traveling south on GA 9. The rear vehicle was following too closely. Hedden made a three point turn around in the roadway, and initiated his lights and sirens. As he approached the rear vehicle, he observed it pass the front vehicle in a no passing zone. Hedden proceeded around the vehicle that was passed, and observed the violator’s vehicle beginning to travel at a very high rate of speed. Further up the road, Hedden came upon the violator’s vehicle, which had been involved in a crash with a truck. Hedden attempted to extinguish the fire that had erupted in the violator’s vehicle, but it was obvious at this time that the violator was deceased. Hedden and a bystander then ran to the truck that the violator had struck, which was located only a few feet away from the fire. The driver told Hedden that he could not move, however both men were able to pull him from the vehicle and place him in a field away from the fire, thus rescuing him from a deadly situation.
2013 Governor’s PUBLIC SAFETY HONOREES

Act of Heroism

Jason Johnson and Clay Hammond
Georgia Department of Public Safety and McDuffie County Sheriff’s Department

At around 8:05 p.m. on February 20, 2013, GSP Lieutenant Jason Johnson and McDuffie County Deputy Clay Hammond were two of the first emergency personnel to locate the fiery wreckage of a Beechcraft Hawker aircraft crash in a heavily wooded swamp behind the Milliken Plant in Thomson. Seven people were on board. Five people were killed and two survived.

Upon arriving on the scene, Johnson and Hammond found the co-pilot staggering around the crash scene and the pilot still buckled inside his cockpit seat next to the burning plane. Johnson and Hammond responded to the pilot and cut his safety belts; they then pulled him from the wreckage and carried him several hundred yards out of the swamp to be airlifted for treatment with help from other emergency responders. Based on eyewitness accounts, it can be concluded that the rapid response and decisive actions of Johnson and Hammond saved the life of the pilot.

Act of Heroism

Anthony Kerry Stallings
Dunwoody Police Department

On May 23, 2013 at around 4:30 p.m., Officer Anthony Kerry Stallings responded to a call for service at the Manhattan Condominiums in Dunwoody.

Upon arriving, Stallings observed a woman standing beyond the protective barrier on the fifth floor of a parking deck apparently preparing to commit suicide by jumping to her death. Stallings immediately made his way to the fifth floor where he found the woman crying while standing with her feet halfway off the nine-inch ledge.

Stallings began speaking with the woman and after several minutes, he was able to work his way closer to her. Once close enough, Stallings reached over the barrier and grabbed the woman’s hand, pulled her to him and grabbed her in a bear hug, pulling her over the barrier and onto the safety of the parking deck.
Act of Heroism

Michael E. Patterson
Bleckley County Sheriff’s Office

On September 7, 2012, at approximately at 9pm, Deputy Michael E. Patterson and Sergeant Lee James Baggs, Jr. responded to an ongoing theft investigation. Upon arrival, Baggs and Patterson observed the theft victim and the suspect, who was holding one of the items taken during the theft, having a conversation. Patterson informed the suspect that he was under arrest for possession of stolen property and attempted to handcuff him. The suspect began to struggle in an attempt to resist arrest. The suspect pulled away completely from Patterson and the two went to the ground, where they continued to struggle. Baggs removed his X26 Taser, informing the suspect that he would deploy his Taser if the suspect continued to resist arrest, which did not deter the suspect. Baggs deployed his Taser striking the suspect. After the five second Taser cycle had been completed, Patterson observed the suspect’s right hand coming from under his body holding a handgun. Patterson alerted Baggs that the suspect had a gun so that he could obtain cover. Patterson then attempted to back away so that he could obtain cover before engaging the suspect, but in the process Patterson slipped and fell. Throughout this occurrence, Patterson was able to keep his eyes trained on the suspect, and it was at this time that he observed the suspect bring the handgun up and take aim on Baggs. Realizing he had no choice but to save his partner’s life, Patterson fired one shot from his service weapon while seated on the ground into the chest of the suspect, which stopped the suspect’s threat.

Deputy Patterson then immediately went to the suspect’s location secured the weapon and offered medical assistance until paramedics arrived.
The contributions Forsyth County Fire Chief Danny D. Bowman has made to the fire services in metro Atlanta and Georgia over his 45-year career are many. Having just celebrated 10 years as chief of the Forsyth County Fire Department, Bowman has overseen the substantial growth of the department, working to keep pace with the county’s rapid development as Forsyth remains among the fastest growing counties.

Bowman believes strongly in regional cooperation with all neighboring jurisdictions, noting that emergencies do not recognize political boundaries and that “when one fire department has a problem, we all have a problem.” His staunch support of the department’s Honor Guard includes his blanket approval for the Guard to travel statewide to honor fallen public safety professionals and military veterans.

Bowman’s involvement in local, regional, state and national fire service and community organizations is long-running and includes: governor’s appointee to the Georgia Board of Public Safety, past president and past parliamentarian for the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs, past president for the Metropolitan Atlanta Area Fire Chiefs Association, member of the Association County Commissioners Georgia Public Safety and the Courts Committee, EMS Advisory Council Member for the Georgia EMS Region 2 Council, Forsyth County Representative to the Lake Lanier Water Safety Task Force, graduate of Leadership Forsyth, past board member for Leadership Forsyth and Youth Leadership Forsyth, service in the U.S. military, career member of the Georgia State Firefighters’ Association, and served on the Thompson Group, a Washington, D.C. advisory panel for the Fair Labor and Standards Act.

As Forsyth County’s fire chief, Bowman has aggressively replaced the entire front-line fleet of fire apparatus and replaced seven fire stations and a new Fire Headquarters. Bowman oversaw the county’s ISO process in 2009, in which Forsyth County improved from a 6/9 to a 5. Additional accomplishments under Bowman’s leadership include: supervised the drafting of the current Forsyth County Fire Prevention Code; implemented the department’s BLS and ALS programs; oversaw purchase and installation of the county’s 17 outdoor severe weather sirens; created Aerial’s House, the annual toy collection for local children in need; and spearheaded the effort to develop the September 11, 2001 memorial at the Forsyth County Public Safety Complex. With Bowman’s vision, the department’s inaugural annual report was printed for the year 2005. Now in its eighth year, the publication continues to gain national accolades.

His professionalism, sincere compassion for his troops and genuine love of the fire service make Danny D. Bowman worthy of recognition for outstanding contribution to his profession.
Outstanding Contribution to Profession

Owen Bruce Bugg
Georgia Department of Public Safety

Over the course of his career, Captain Owen Bruce Bugg has proven to be a leader in the transportation safety field. With 34 years of experience in state law enforcement, he has served in many leadership roles including Director of Compliance and Safety for the Georgia Public Service Commission’s (PSC) Transportation Division, Chair of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance’s Hazardous Materials Committee, and most recently as commander of the Department of Public Safety’s (DPS) Motor Carrier Compliance Division Region 3.

At DPS, Captain Bugg has held assignments at Headquarters and has commanded two MCCD Regions: Region 4 stretching from Covington to Augusta; and Region 3, which includes Metro Atlanta, I-20 to the Alabama line, and the HOV and HOT lane Enforcement Unit. During his time at the Department, Captain Bugg was one of the pioneers for performance brake testing on motor coaches at special events in Georgia.

Captain Bugg has also received extensive training throughout his career, which includes an internship at the U.S. Department of Transportation, a commercial vehicle post-crash investigations course, numerous specialized courses on hazardous and radioactive materials, as well as commercial vehicle inspections. He holds Georgia P.O.S.T. certifications in Radar Operation, Field Training Officer, General Instructor, and Hazardous Materials Instructor. He also held inspector certifications in North American Standard Level 1 inspections, hazardous materials inspections, cargo tank inspections, bulk packaging inspections, motor coach and passenger vehicle inspections, “Level 6” radioactive materials inspections, and performance brake testing. Captain Bugg is one of the noted experts in hazardous material and radioactive transportation matters. He has provided valuable input for numerous commercial vehicle regulatory conferences and rulemaking. His expertise is noted across the country.

During the entirety of his career, Bugg established cooperative relationships with other local, state and federal agencies, including the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State Fire Marshall’s Office, and the Georgia Department of Labor. He served for over 15 years as a member of one of the Labor Department’s Advisory Boards, setting the program agenda for a pioneering safety, health, and environmental training conference. In addition he served as co-chair of the Heavy Vehicle Task Team for the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety.
Outstanding Contribution to Profession

Robert E. Keller
State Board of Pardons and Paroles

Robert E. “Bob” Keller has devoted his entire career to public safety and serving the citizens of Georgia. He has served as Executive Counsel and former Chairman of the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia. Before joining the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council, he served as the Assistant District Attorney of the Clayton Judicial Circuit from 1972 to 1974 and maintained a private practice from 1974 to 1977. He then served as the District Attorney of the Clayton Judicial Circuit from 1977 to 2004. During those years, he was voted District Attorney of the Year in 1987 and 2001. As a leader among the Georgia’s district attorneys, Keller served as the voice of state prosecutors to a generation of lawmakers and governors.

Keller was appointed to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles by Governor Sonny Perdue on January 3, 2007, and had previously served as Vice Chairman. He has always gone above and beyond in putting the citizens of Georgia first and foremost. Known to his peers as the Dean of the Parole Board, he has been vital in the success of the Board through his vast knowledge of the law and advocacy for the victims he has always sought to protect.

Keller has served as a member of the Georgia Board of Public Safety, Board of Trustees of the Georgia Judicial Retirement System, Georgia Code Revision Plan Committee and Commission to Assess Crime Laboratory Needs into the 21st century. He also served as Vice Chair of the Governor’s Commission on Certainty in Sentencing. In addition, he was a 2009 delegate to Israel with the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange. Currently, Keller is President of the Clayton County Juvenile Justice Fund, Inc.

Keller is a leader amongst his peers and has a legal wisdom that is unmatched. His reputation and credibility among the judiciary and prosecutors is highly admired. As a member of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, he has been essential in reforms that have been smarter on crime and on the impact of the citizens of Georgia. His invaluable insight has led to changes in the parole process that has made Georgia a leader in paroling authorities.

In his 41 years of service, Bob has had an immeasurable effect on the citizens and the great state of Georgia.
Outstanding Contribution to Profession

Carolyn Liggins
Georgia Department of Corrections

Major Carolyn Liggins is a trusted Public Safety Officer, consummate professional, outstanding instructor, and a hero in her community. Currently serving as the Georgia Corrections Academy Basic Correctional Officer Training (BCOT) program manager, she has given 29 years of service to the state of Georgia and 15 years’ experience leading in BCOT.

Major Liggins’ unit conducts 11 Basic programs at the Academy annually, with at least two additional off-site programs training and certifying more than 2,100 Correctional Officers every year. Under Major Liggins management, BCOT transitioned from a 160-hour, four-week program to a 240-hour, five-week program. Passionate about delivering the best training possible, she successfully incorporated more reality-based training. Her cadets now conduct cell search practical examinations at a working prison, finding real contraband and making our prisons safer. Rather than simply listen to lectures, cadets perform role-play scenarios which are job related; such as stopping a suspicious vehicle on prison grounds and checking vehicles for entry into a facility.

This past year, the BCOT unit experienced a complete turnover of instructors. The average BCOT instructor tenure dropped from a historical average of seven years to only eight months. Major Liggins keen leadership, mentoring acumen, organizational skills and dedication enabled the program to continue running flawlessly with the same high standard of excellence it has always enjoyed under her supervision.

Major Liggins is an active member of her community as well. She organized a monthly blood drive at Tift College, and her cadets never fail to impress the Red Cross with their generosity and willingness to donate much needed blood. She served as the 2010 Department of Corrections statewide coordinator for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Georgia with 125 officers and cadets participating in a formation run. Under her leadership, her team raised $41,936.82, and became the second-highest fund raising agency in the state that year. Ms. Allison Kaczinsky, the Director of Special Events for Special Olympics Georgia, told Major Liggins that she had been waiting for over five years to see such a great Torch Run. Coordinating efforts across the state, Major Liggins raised more than $5,000 for Special Olympics Georgia on her own and assisted in raising money for Relay For Life, donating her time and energy to fight cancer.

Under Major Liggins’ professional leadership, thousands of new Correctional Officers are trained to effectively manage Georgia’s most hardened criminals, assuring the safety of Georgia’s citizens.
In 2008, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Office, Gregory Jones, called a meeting of state law enforcement officials to consider the prospect of having a “Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar” (LEEDS) for the State of Georgia. At that time, Rick Townsend was the president of the Georgia Chapter of the FBI National Academy Associates and he was one of the individuals present when the group decided to sponsor the “Georgia LEEDS” program. Though the FBI assigned some of the National Academy instructors to the program and offered a training site, there was much more that had to be done to make the program viable. To date, five seminars have been conducted with 259 senior executive level law enforcement officials trained.

Townsend picked up the ball and has been running with it ever since. He took steps to have the organization incorporated, registered with the Secretary of State and declared a “charitable” (501 C3) organization with the Internal Revenue Service. Townsend has handled duties and responsibilities that were unimaginable at the founding conference. For example, maximizing classroom time by catering lunches for the attendees and recruiting exceptional instructors from all walks of life. To build a sense of camaraderie and cohesiveness among the attendees, Townsend scheduled outings such as dinners, Braves games and visits to the Georgia Aquarium during the week-long training.

Townsend personally handles the registration of all attendees and instructors and the administration of Georgia LEEDS reporting annually to the Board of Directors. All the while he has been meeting his obligations with the Georgia Department of Corrections as a full-time investigator. A strength that Townsend has demonstrated time and time again is his ability to work with the most senior law enforcement executives in the state of Georgia. In so doing, he has established a personal reputation for excellence and that reputation has served as a cornerstone for the successful LEEDS program.

Townsend has volunteered to serve as the Chapter Historian and he is working with other past Chapter Presidents to develop a 65th commemorative history book of the Georgia Chapter of the FBINAA.

Excellence in all aspects of service to the Georgia LEEDS program is a hallmark of Townsend’s demonstrated performance, and he has been of exceptional service to the law enforcement profession throughout the state of Georgia.
Outstanding Contribution to Profession

Robert Keith Wages
Georgia Department of Public Health

R. Keith Wages, who currently serves as the Director of the State Office of EMS and Trauma, has dedicated his entire career to the EMS community, serving as EMT, EMS Director, EMS Program Director, Deputy State Director, as well as serving as a consultant for disaster and emergency preparedness issues.

Initially licensed in 1977, Wages began his career as an EMT (#8074) with Barrow County EMS. Three years later, he accepted the position of EMS Director with Walton County. In 1982, he began serving as the EMS Program Director for the Northeast Georgia Health District. Over the next eight years, he worked toward developing 911 EMS Systems as well as hosting a nationally recognized Vehicle Extrication School in Athens. In 1990, Dr. John B. O’Neal, Director of the State Office of EMS, asked Wages to work with him as the Deputy Director. Two years later, he was promoted to Director of the State Office of EMS and served in that capacity until 1997. During that time, he played an integral role in setting up the EMS System for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Wages has worked very closely with many Georgia hospitals to advocate and encourage EMS involvement in various programs for the improvement of patient care, including the Mission-Lifeline Program through the American Heart Association and the Georgia Coverdell Acute Stroke Registry. He has been a positive EMS role model, while serving on numerous boards and associations, including serving on the Board of Directors of the National Association of EMS Officials as a Regional Representative for the South Central Region.

During his career, Wages has been recognized with numerous regional and state EMS awards, including the Dr. Zeb L. Burrell, Jr. Distinguished Service Award (1993), the Dr. John B. O’Neal, III EMS Pioneer Award (2007), the Georgia Association of EMS Chairman’s Award (2009), and the Northeast Georgia EMS Special Achievement Award (2010).

Over his forty consecutive years of service, Wages has been recognized as one of the most respected leaders in EMS. No one has dedicated more time and effort advocating for the advancement and enhancement of pre-hospital care in Georgia than Keith Wages.
Outstanding Contribution to Profession

Wayne Wilcox
Armstrong Atlantic State University

There is a crisis in the United States when it comes to digital forensics capability. Most states report a 6 to 12 month backlog in cases waiting for digital forensics analysis. At the beginning of 2013, The Georgia Bureau of Investigation reported a 7 to 11 month backlog of cases. This is a systemic problem at the federal, state, and local levels, and the backlog is predicted to grow. This problem may continue to plague the nation, but in Georgia, there is a plan.

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Wayne Wilcox, the Armstrong Atlantic State University Police Department has developed a program that is helping Georgia address this problem today. Chief Willcox has taken a small, non-descript university police department and re-focused its mission to include digital forensics. In only nine months, the Armstrong Police Cyber Forensics Division has become a regional leader in providing digital analysis services to criminal justice agencies throughout Georgia. Device analysis has been provided for the FBI, ATF, DEA, Secret Service, GBI, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Department of Revenue, Savannah-Chatham Metro Police, Chatham County District Attorney, Clayton County District Attorney, and dozens of other local law enforcement agencies. The backlog is usually less than 30 days and in some cases, devices are analyzed the same day.

The program is unique and innovative because university police officers have been trained as digital forensics technicians and they work during non-committed time performing digital forensics operations. This allows for a 24/7/365 digital forensics capability that is not often found in digital forensics labs.

Not only is the Armstrong Police Cyber Forensics Division assisting the criminal justice system, but the division is assisting the University’s Criminal Justice Department. Division staff members teach the Cyber-Law Graduate class and offer a digital forensics internship that qualifies students to take a national certification test. The internship prepares university students to fill critical shortfalls in law enforcement workforce in digital forensics analysis and investigation. For these reasons, I am pleased to nominate Chief Wayne Willcox for the Governor’s Public Safety Award.
2013
Public Safety Awards Committee
Comprised of representatives from the following groups:

Mr. Ben Hinson, Chairman
Citizen Member

Jim Hanson
Citizen Member

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Department of Natural Resources,
Law Enforcement Division

Department of Public Health,
State Offices of EMS and Trauma

Fraternal Order of Police

Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

Georgia Association of Emergency
Medical Services

Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Georgia Department of Corrections

Georgia Department of Transportation

Captain Keith Canup, Vice Chairman
Georgia Department of Public Safety

Georgia Emergency Management Agency

Georgia Firefighters Standards & Training Council

Georgia Peace Officer Standards & Training Council

Georgia Prison Wardens’ Association

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

Georgia Sheriffs’ Association

Georgia State Firefighters Association

Georgia State Patrol Historical Society

Peace Officers’ Association of Georgia

Police Benevolent Association of Georgia

Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia

State Board of Pardons & Paroles