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NEWS RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Presents Wakeman Police Officer with Ohio Fire Service Citizen's Award

Pozniak Rescued Young Girl from Apartment Fire in January

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — State Fire Marshal Kevin S. Reardon presented Wakeman Police Officer Steve Pozniak with the Ohio Fire Service Citizen's Award today for rescuing a young girl from an apartment fire back in January.

Pozniak was off duty, working as a security guard at a Cleveland apartment complex on Jan. 26 when he heard screaming coming from a nearby townhouse. He quickly arrived on scene and discovered an 8-year-old girl leaning out of a third-story window.

Without a second thought, Pozniak leapt atop his security vehicle and beckoned the child to jump. In an incredible act of trust, the girl overcame her fear and jumped, allowing Pozniak to break her fall and escape the blaze uninjured.

"When you saw the situation, without hesitation or regard for your own life, you responded and saved that girl's life. You are a credit to yourself, your community and all Ohioans," said Marshal Reardon. "We're very proud of you and I know the city of Cleveland is very proud of you."

Crews with the Cleveland Fire Department then arrived and ran into the burning building to rescue the girl's 2-year-old sister, whose mother and 6-year-old brother were also able to escape the fire safely.

Marshal Reardon recognized Pozniak virtually during a brief ceremony earlier this afternoon. Joined by his family, Cleveland Fire Chief Angelo Calvillo and the chief's secretary, Kristina Kosnik, Pozniak was also honored by Lt. Michael Norman of the Cleveland Fire Department, who nominated him for the award.

This is the 40th year of the annual Ohio Fire Service Hall of Fame and Fire Awards, presented each year by the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of State Fire Marshal and Ohio Department of Public Safety's Division of EMS. Today's ceremony marked the sixth and final event hosted by the State Fire Marshal's office this year.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pozniak and this year's 11 other honorees were recognized individually at smaller, more intimate award ceremonies in their home communities or online.

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This award is handed out annually to members of the public who, at great personal risk to themselves, are credited with directly saving or attempting to save a life or lives during an extreme fire or other emergency rescue situation.



Steve Pozniak, recipient of the 2020 Ohio Fire Service Citizen's Award.

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*The **Ohio Department of Public Safety**, through the Division of EMS, oversees the certification of emergency medical technicians and firefighters and ensures that the professionals in these lifesaving roles are properly trained, educated and prepared for emergency situations.*

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