



Division of Occupational Safety and Health

September 2011

Lifesaving award recipients – 60th Governor’s Industrial Safety and Health Conference

2011 Lifesaving Awards

Edmonds School District, Edmonds - Candice McHaffie

Candice McHaffie, lunchroom supervisor at Edmonds Elementary, was in the busy school cafeteria on March 11, 2011, when she noticed one student choking. She ran to the girl and used the Heimlich Maneuver to dislodge several pieces of cheese the girl was choking on, allowing the girl to breathe again.

Department of General Administration, Olympia - Richard Fike

Richard Fike was heading home on March 10, 2011, when he witnessed a head-on collision in Lacey between a Chevrolet Blazer and a Ford Escape. Fike checked on the injured driver in the Escape and went to the Blazer, which had burst into flames. Another man was helping that injured driver. Fike and the other Good Samaritan man could see an unconscious female passenger inside, but the heat was too intense to reach her.

Fike returned to the Escape and, with the help of the other rescuer, pulled that injured driver from her vehicle. Meanwhile, the driver of the Blazer had managed to pull his badly injured passenger from the wreckage despite the heat, but he could not move her away from the flames and she remained at great risk. Fike and the other rescuer braved the fire to pull the woman to safety. She died later that night, but the others involved in the crash survived.

TECCO Trucking, Olympia - Tilden E. Curl

On Oct. 27, 2010, truck driver Tilden E. Curl was southbound on Highway 99 near Tulare, Calif., when a car lost control, crossed traffic, left the highway and stopped with its front wheels lodged on some railroad tracks with a train on the way. An elderly female passenger exited the car but the driver was unconscious inside. Curl, who had stopped to help, found the door locked. Ignoring the on-coming train barreling down on him, Curl squeezed his arm inside to unlock the door, unfastened the man’s seatbelt and dragged him out just seconds before the train struck. At the hospital, the man was diagnosed as having had a diabetic reaction and made a full recovery.

Avista, Spokane - Jerry Collins

On March 5, 2011, Jerry Collins was ice fishing at Cave Lake, Idaho, when he saw two other anglers in trouble. One had fallen through the ice while cutting fishing holes with a chain saw,

the other had tried to help but also fell through the ice. Collins approached the struggling men and reached out to the closest with the handle from their chainsaw. With one man clinging to the chain saw and the other holding his friend's ankle, Collins was able to pull both to safety.

**MA Mortensen, Bellevue - Jesse J Michaletz
VECA Electric and Technologies, Seattle - Louis Olsen**

On Aug. 16, 2010, Louis Olsen and Jesse Micheletz were doing a job walk around and safety inspection at the Providence Regional Medical Center construction project in Everett when they heard of a man down. Louis and Jesse ran to the scene and found a worker with no signs of life. They began resuscitation efforts, with Jesse doing chest compressions and Louis providing rescue breaths. They continued for 12 minutes until medics arrived. The worker was taken to the hospital where he underwent bypass surgery and is now recovering from the incident.

Department of Natural Resources, Olympia - Calvin Ohlson-Kiehn

Calvin Ohlson-Kiehn and another DNR employee, Dean Warner, were working about a quarter mile apart in a remote area of Skagit County on Jan. 20, 2011. It was snowing and there were two and a half inches of snow on the ground. Calvin heard yelling and found Dean down a slope. He had stepped in a hole and broken his ankle. Calvin called dispatchers to report the accident, then retrieved his truck. He turned on the heater and went down the slope to get his colleague. Dean was cold and shock had begun to set in. Calvin carried Dean up the steep slope, placed him in the truck and drove to meet the ambulance. Dean's injury required surgery, but he made a full recovery.

Department of Ecology, Olympia - Al Newman

On June 23, 2011, Al Newman was in the men's locker room when another employee, Stephen Bernath, began gasping for air and ended up face down on the floor. His face and neck were bright red, he eyes were glassy and he was unresponsive. Al went to his locker and called 911 on his cell phone. Following the 911 operator's instructions, Al found that Steve did not have a pulse and was not breathing. Activating the speaker on his cell, Al began chest compressions and continued talking to the 911 operator. Al continued his resuscitation efforts until the medics arrived. The worker survived and is back at work.

Gary Merlino Construction, Seattle - Glen Palacios and Kirk Whalen

While working on a construction site on Interstate 90 on Mercer Island on May 5, 2011, Glen Palacios and Kirk Whalen heard the sound of screeching tires and cars honking. A driver had crashed into a concrete barrier and rear-ended another car. Glen and Kirk ran to the crash and pulled a heart attack victim from one of the cars, doing chest compressions to sustain the victim until medics arrived. The man was taken to the hospital and survived.

Avista, Spokane - Don Galloway

On June 27, 2010, Don Galloway was driving on Highway 95 south of Moscow, Idaho when he came across two vehicles in a ditch following a collision. One of the vehicles, a Ford 4-door pickup, was on fire with the driver unconscious and a passenger trapped. The other vehicle had a trapped driver and four passengers, who got out on their own. Don and two other passing motorists managed to save the passenger from the burning vehicle, but they were unable to rescue the driver. Don also stayed with the driver of the second vehicle, who was injured, and kept him still and conscious by talking to him. He continued directing others to put compresses, towels and blankets on some cuts and abrasions until medics arrived.

Avista, Spokane - Journeyman Lineman Paul Gifford, Journeyman Lineman Brian Partington, Journeyman Lineman Brian Morse, Apprentice Lineman Bryant Maupin

On Oct. 26, 2010, around 11:30 a.m, Paul Gifford, Brian Partington, Brian Morse and Bryant Maupin were working when a woman ran to them yelling for help. Her husband had fallen from the roof of his home while cleaning gutters. The crew ran to help. One of the men called 911 and they all worked to stabilize the injured man's head and neck and treat him for shock, wrapping a coat around the victim's head to keep him warm. The injured man was taken to the hospital with four broken ribs and a head injury, but he survived.

Pierce County Public Works and Utilities, University Place - John Dusek, Scott Roth, Clint Sumerall, Tom Purcella, Jason Robinson, Larry Butner, Mandel Hardy, Kurt Cushman, John Crest, Mark Emery, Eric Sund, Richard Lonzak, Mark Newport, Bob Atkinson, Nick Palermo, Tyler Robertson, Paul Hargrove, Tom Cornwall

On March 21, 2011, workers for a contractor repairing a sewer line for Pierce County Public Works and Utilities descended 90 feet underground in a shaft. The work required one worker to enter a 6-foot diameter sewer tunnel to assess the flow through a smaller bypass pipe. When the worker reached the end of his safety line a few feet short of the pipe he was to examine, he unhooked his lifeline cable, lost his footing and fell into the fast flowing wastewater. An alert was issued over the radio and workers John Dusek, Scott Roth, Clint Sumerall, Tom Purcella, Jason Robinson, Larry Butner, Mandel Hardy, Kurt Cushman, John Crest, Mark Emery, Eric Sund, Richard Lonzak, Mark Newport, Bob Atkinson, Nick Palermo, Tyler Robertson, Paul Hargrove, Tom Cornwall and others from Pierce County Public Works and Utilities responded. The men organized a rescue, opening access points to increase ventilation and monitoring the air before lowering a rescuer attached to a lifeline into the tunnel. The victim worker was successfully saved and survived his ordeal.

Grays Harbor Public Utility District #1, Aberdeen - Dale Benner, Steve Tobin, Justin Mills, Natheon Camus, Steve Button, Toni Fairchild, Rachel Frederickson

Just before midnight on Oct. 25, 2010, Dale Benner and his six-member crew -- Steve Tobin, Justin Mills, Natheon Camus, Steve Button, Toni Fairchild, and Rachel Frederickson -- were returning from a call in a four-vehicle caravan when Dale saw a two-story house on fire. Dale, in the lead truck, stopped the caravan then called 911. The rest of the crew jumped out of their trucks and pounded on the front door and walls of the house to wake the occupants. A man opened the door, clearly just awakened, and the crew discovered there were two adults inside and six children, ranging from pre-school to high school age. The crew helped the sleepy children and parents out of house, with Dale going part way up the stairs to wake any others sleeping inside. Once everyone was outside, Dale took a head count. When firefighters

arrived, the family of eight and the seven-member line crew were safely outside the burning house, along with the two family dogs.