

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GWINNETT CHAMBER TO RECOGNIZE PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS AT VALOR AWARDS CEREMONY

Medal of Valor, Lifesaving Award, Public Safety Person of the Year, Public Safety Unit of the Year, Communications Person of the Year and Medal of Merit to be Presented

Duluth, GA- To recognize Gwinnett's public safety professionals for helping to strengthen our community, the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce and Presenting Sponsors Entaire Global Companies, Inc., Mobile Communications of Gwinnett, Inc., and Motorola will present the fifth annual Valor Awards on March 26, 2010 at 11:30 a.m. at The Atlanta Marriott – Gwinnett Place. The keynote speaker at the event will be Sergeant Billy Waugh, former Green Beret and CIA Operative.

This special reception will honor those in public safety by presenting awards to the men and women who have given the most to protect and serve the citizens of Gwinnett. There will be six different award categories including the Medal of Valor Award, Lifesaving Award, Public Safety Person of the Year, Public Safety Unit of the Year, Communications Person of the Year and Medal of Merit.

“The Valor Awards ceremony gives us the opportunity to work with citizens and businesses that we normally see at their worst possible times. It gives us the chance to work with these individuals and corporations in a positive way and to be celebrated,” said David Dusik, Assistant Fire Chief, Gwinnett County Department of Fire & Emergency Services.

At the Valor Awards, guests will hear stories of heroism that involve officers rendering aid to accident victims and rescuing passengers from burning vehicles with disregard for their own safety. Guests will be moved by stories of bravery where officers put themselves in the line of fire to save the lives of fellow officers and citizens.

In the eyes of Gwinnett's citizens, other deeds are worthy of praise as well, such as local programs that were put into place to educate high school students about the importance of wearing seatbelts and the consequences of a DUI. There are many admirable duties performed above and beyond the call of duty that deserve recognition such as youth mentoring programs and fundraisers for fallen officers and those less fortunate.

Although each act of heroism, bravery, and kindness is no less important than the next, the Great Flood of 2009 and the events and stories surrounding the flood will go down in history books. Due to the magnitude of the event, heroic acts beyond most people's comprehension were performed not only by Gwinnett's Swift Water Rescue Team, but by all of Gwinnett's public safety professionals.

In the early morning hours of September 21, 2009 in a two hour time frame, the 911 Communications Center received 503 calls for service in comparison to a routine day call volume of 30-40 calls for this same time frame. In total on this day, the Communications Center received 5,850 calls for service compared to 2,478 calls for service the day before the storm. In addition, during the Great Flood of 2009, the fire department as a whole responded to over 300 emergency calls related to flooding.

One such story, that thankfully has a happy ending, is that of Gwinnett County citizen Diana Farmer and Gwinnett County Fire & Emergency Services Lieutenant Dominic Aquila, Firefighter II Scott Robertson, and Firefighter III Dale Burney. After three hours of continuous calls related to the flood, the three firefighters arrived on the scene of a woman, Diana, stranded atop her vehicle in the middle of the Yellow River. Diana had been stranded for 30 minutes prior to the crew's arrival and was doubtful a successful rescue would be made. By attending the Valor Awards Ceremony, guests will hear the full details of this heroic story.

Diana, who will be attending the Valor Awards to thank her rescuers, said this of her new found heroes: "I thank God that they were there for me with the skill, strength, and dedication to save my life. I will never be able to thank them enough, but they inspire me to go the extra mile to help others and be grateful for every day I am alive."

As an added highlight to the Valor Awards, Sergeant Major Billy Waugh will be holding a book signing for his most recently published novel, "Isaac Camacho An American Hero," at 11:15 a.m. at the Atlanta Marriott-Gwinnett Place. Books will be available for purchase.

Tickets are still available for those interested in showing their support and appreciation to our local public safety professionals. Tickets are \$45 for Chamber members and \$55 for non-members. For more information, visit www.valorawards.com. The Valor Awards ceremony will take the place of the March General Membership Meeting.

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About the Gwinnett Chamber

Named one of the top three metro chambers in the United States by ACCE, the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce's membership varies from FORTUNE 1,000 companies to innovative startups, and stretches across the Atlanta region, from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport to UGA in Athens. Representing more than 7,200 members from more than 2,500 firms, the Gwinnett Chamber is the Southeast's 6th largest chamber and focuses on creating and growing quality job opportunities while enhancing the community's quality of life.