

2017 THOMAS YATABE AWARDS - TAMPA BAY LEPC

Thomas Yatabe Awards are presented annually by each Local Emergency Planning Committee within the State to signify “outstanding contribution(s) made in the implementation and support of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act.” This year’s Thomas Yatabe Award for the Tampa Bay LEPC was presented to Capt. Frank DeFrancesco of Hernando County Fire Rescue. Each of the nominations submitted for the Tampa Bay LEPC read as follows:



Left to Right: LEPC Coordinator John Meyer, LEPC Chair Scott Ehlers, Award winner - Capt. Frank DeFrancesco & SERC meeting Chair John Johnson.

Capt. Frank DeFrancesco - *“Capt. Frank DeFrancesco is deserving of recognition for the Thomas Yatabe Award for the Tampa Bay LEPC District in 2017. Mr. DeFrancesco has risen in the ranks to Captain during his firefighting career, which has spanned nearly 40 years. Mr. DeFrancesco started with Spring Hill Fire Rescue as a volunteer in 1978. In 1984, he became District Chief of Largo Fire Rescue and then transferred to Hernando County Fire Rescue (HCFR) in 2005 as an Assistant Fire Chief. In May of 2013, he was promoted to Captain of HCFR.*

During his career, Mr. DeFrancesco has taken literally dozens of hazardous materials courses and courses pertaining to other public safety and response matters. It doesn't stop there. Mr. DeFrancesco has shared this knowledge gained as well as his experiences to serve as an instructor at such institutions as the Florida State Fire College, the Pinellas County School System and his private firm. His expertise is shared locally as well as throughout the State.

Mr. DeFrancesco has served on both the Tampa Bay and former Withlacoochee Local Emergency Planning Committees for nearly two decades and is considered a “go to guy” with hazardous materials inquiries and requests. During 2017, Capt. DeFrancesco facilitated the Hernando County Hazmat Team Self-Assessment as well as assisted in the conduct of other agencies, coordinated and assisted in the conduct a Chlorine Response course for Southern Manatee Fire Rescue and assisted with the hazmat team competition component of the annual Fire Rescue East conference.”

One additional nomination was submitted for a well-deserving individual - Lt. Neil Kummerer of the St. Petersburg Fire Department. Lt. Kummerer was asked to step forward and be presented a *Certificate of Appreciation* from the State Emergency Response Commission for his meritorious contributions. Lt. Kummerer’s nomination read as follows:

Lt. Neil Kummerer - *“Lt. Neil Kummerer is deserving of recognition for the Thomas Yatabe Award for the Tampa Bay LEPC District in 2017. Mr. Kummerer is considered one of the true leaders in the streets of Pinellas County and on the drill grounds.*

The role, responsibility and impact of a special operations leader in the streets and within an organization cannot be understated. This position is the first line of support between the organization's mission/culture and the crews that carry it out. The individual filling this role must be an expert in the field, an excellent communicator, display tremendous integrity and loyalty, and above all, display a genuine love for the personnel.



Certificate of Appreciation Award recipient - Neil Kummerer & LEPC Chair Scott Ehlers

Mr. Kummerer has “raised the bar” within the region by not just demanding excellence but helping anyone that asks. He teaches with great pride and effectiveness. Thus, not only does Mr. Kummerer come with a tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience, but he has a natural ability to articulate and disseminate it so that others can grasp and fully apply it. Mr. Kummerer displays great pride in determining where organizational improvement can and should occur, while still minding the values and traditions of the profession.”