

Meritorious Action Award

This year, we recognize all individuals who have displayed courageous actions to save or attempt to save lives.

All nominees in this category will be honored at Natural Gas Connect.

Entry Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This award for individuals will not be considered for industry employees while acting as members of rescue or fire squads, ambulance teams or paramedics at the time of the courageous or Good Samaritan act. • Any employee of an SGA member company is eligible to be nominated for this award. A representative from a member company must submit a written application recommending the award. A narrative describing the event must accompany an application.

Submissions Overview

Meritorious Action Award Submissions – 8 Nominees		
Company Name	Program Name	ID Number
Xcel Energy	Marshal Fire Rescue	MA-1
Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline	Southern Star team member provides life-saving assistance as a young man begins choking	MA-2
Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline	Preparation pays off as team member’s ‘average day’ turns out to be anything but that	MA-3
Atmos Energy	Atmos Energy Employees Assist Volunteer Firefighters with Vehicle Accident	MA-4
Southeast Connections, LLC	Virginia-based Southeast Connects Crew Saves Woman’s Life from Fire	MA-5
Atmos Energy	Bremen House Fire Rescue	MA-6
Southern Star Central Gas Pipelines	Lane Ewing	MA-7
Miller Pipeline	Catch ONE	MA-8

Nomination MA-1	
SGA Member Company Name	Xcel Energy
Program Name	<i>Marshal Fire Rescue</i>
Program Description	<p>Sr Ops Manager Seth Sneller was evacuating our compressor station due to the Marshal fire. As he drove through the smoke and fire along the road he came upon a ranch hand that had been rounding up horses when the Marshal fire approached the area. Seth found him sitting in the ditch confused and disorientated as to what he should do. Once Seth got him into the truck he began to cry knowing he was being brought to safety.</p> <p>Gas Transmission Operations Supervisor Sam Tellechea was leaving the Xcel Energy Marshal compressor station due to the Marshal Wildfire approaching the station. He could not drive the normal road out due to fire on both sides of the road. Sam turned around and started driving out a dirt road/path out of the area when he came upon a truck that had driven into the ditch – visibility due to smoke was very poor. He found the driver still in the vehicle. He talked the driver into joining him in his vehicle and they drove out to safety.</p>
Results of/Response to the Program	Seth Sneller and Sam Tellechea displayed courage and compassion when they helped people return to safety during the Marshal Fire.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	Seth Sneller and Sam Tellechea displayed courage and compassion when they helped people return to safety during the incoming fire.
SGA Membership Category	Transmission

Nomination MA-2	
SGA Member Company Name	Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline
Program Name	<i>Southern Star team member provides life-saving assistance as a young man begins choking</i>

Program Description	Southern Star team member Shane Newby was attending at a concert in Oklahoma City. As the event was coming to an end, he stood in line with his brother-in-law to buy a souvenir t-shirt. While waiting, he noticed a teenager eating a soft pretzel in front of him and he began coughing. A few minutes later, the young man began grasping at his throat with both of his hands. Shane approached the young man’s mother and explained he was CPR certified and asked her permission to help. She said yes and Shane performed Heimlich maneuver with success. While this was happening, Shane’s brother-in-law called 911 and EMS quickly arrived on the scene.
Results of/Response to the Program	Shane’s quick actions and CPR certification through Southern Star’s safety training program helped save his young man’s life. Shane shared his experience across the company so others may realize the value in skills and training each employee receives that can save a life!
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	Sharing the story among the Southern Star team emphasized the importance of safety culture and first aid response to help those faced with emergency situations.
SGA Membership Category	Transmission

Nomination MA-3	
SGA Member Company Name	Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline
Program Name	<i>Preparation pays off as team member’s ‘average day’ turns out to be anything but that</i>
Program Description	For Tyler Ashline, March 14, 2022 was supposed to be just another average day. As South Region Manager for Southern Star, Tyler was making a trip he had made many times before, traveling between an office in Blackwell, Oklahoma to a nearby station yard. However, this day would turn out to be anything but average. Tyler was headed east on a four-lane highway when he noticed a semi on its side in the middle of the westbound lanes. Several people had begun to pull over when a man jumped up on the truck to start helping the driver out. Knowing the possibility that more assistance was needed, Tyler stopped, threw on his reflective vest, grabbed his first aid kit, and headed over to the scene. When he approached the people on site, someone called out for a fire extinguisher, with a fire starting on the overturned truck. The truck was carrying vegetable oil that was now spilled

	<p>all over the side of the road. Conditions were not on their side that day. With gusts of around 20 mph, dry grass all around, and the area being under a Red Flag warning for risk of a major wildfire, the danger for the driver still in the truck was apparent. When Tyler retrieved his fire extinguisher, as supplied for all company vehicles, and returned to the semi, other truck drivers had stopped and used their extinguishers to try to knock the fire down. It kept burning. Tyler used his extinguisher to add to the effort as well. They were not able to get it out, but they kept it small enough to help the driver out of the truck and get him to a safe distance. They sat the driver down and Tyler performed a check of his vitals, which he learned from company-provided CPR training to make sure the driver sustained no serious injuries. During this time, the fire was still being combatted. Once the fire department arrived, they took over the firefighting efforts. The driver was only badly shaken and a little disoriented, so Tyler requested that he stay seated and wait until the EMTs evaluated him. Tyler stayed by the driver's side until the EMTs arrived and provided them with his assessment. The EMTs took over, and Tyler checked in with the state trooper one more time before heading out to complete what was supposed to be another "average day."</p>
Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Transmission

Nomination MA-4	
SGA Member Company Name	Atmos Energy
Program Name	<i>Atmos Energy Employees Assist Volunteer Firefighters with Vehicle Accident</i>
Program Description	<p>Crew Leader Joey Fontenot and Construction Operators Alex Washington and Calvin Caesar were recently headed to a low gas no pressure call, in three separate vehicles on Highway 106, about 30 miles north of Lafayette. In the lead, Fontenot rounded a curve and suddenly saw a Chevrolet Silverado pickup, laying on its side in a ditch. He made a U-turn and grabbed his work gloves and fire extinguisher. Another passerby had already called 911. The driver-side door was in the air and the passenger door was jammed in the ditch. The wreck had just happened. "Three women were in the front on a bench-type seat," Fontenot said. "The woman in the middle was laying on top of the right-side</p>

	<p>passenger and they could not move. The driver was caught between the airbag and her seat. There was smoke in the vehicle, which turned out to be dust from the airbags. The driver said she was okay so Calvin and I pried the door open and he held it while I pulled her out. The other two passengers were injured and could not move, so we left them alone.” When two volunteer firefighters arrived, the employees helped them get the ladder off their truck and then climbed on top of the Silverado. One firefighter used the Jaws of Life to cut a section off the top of the front door and another piece between the front and back door. “Several of us peeled the roof back and carefully pulled the first woman out of the truck, onto a board on top of the truck and then to the ground, where we put her on the ambulance stretcher and into the ambulance. We did the same thing with the other passenger.” Once the ambulance took the ladies away, the three employees headed to their job site. As they were working, one of the firefighters stopped by and said the two passengers were headed to the hospital but were expected to be fine after some recuperation.</p>
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>Following the accident, Clay Morgan with the Evangeline Parish Fire Protection District sent an appreciative email to Atmos Energy leadership. “Our fire district was shorthanded that day. I can’t thank the Atmos Energy crew enough for stepping up to help us with this very difficult and complex rescue. Without the Atmos Energy employees, extrication time would have increased and the outcome for the patients could have been exceedingly worse. They were absolutely great.”</p>
<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>“We were just paying it forward, doing what we hope someone would do for us,” Fontenot said. “We are all First Responders and trained in CPR and were prepared to help in any way. We talked with the ladies every minute until the firefighters arrived, making sure they maintained consciousness.”</p>
<p>Supporting Documents</p>	<p>Click to view.</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Distribution</p>

<p>Nomination MA-5</p>	
<p>SGA Member Company Name</p>	<p>Southeast Connections, LLC</p>

<p>Program Name</p>	<p><i>Virginia-based Southeast Connects Crew Saves Woman’s Life from Fire</i></p>
<p>Program Description</p>	<p>What started as a typical workday turned into a life-saving miracle when our Norfolk, Virginia gas distribution crew who was working on a job site nearby saw smoke coming from a home and smelled fire. They rushed to the scene with fire extinguishers looking to help however they could. What they found was an elderly woman outside the home calling for help, who told them her 80-year-old mother-in-law was still inside. The group tried to enter the home but was quickly met with thick black smoke and had to retreat. As they waited for emergency responders, they could hear the woman inside calling for help. That’s when Southeast Connections Employees Ryan Nottingham and Emilio Amaya decided to crawl back into the home on their knees. Despite very low visibility and dangerous conditions, they were able to locate the woman and dragged her from the home. The group then comforted the rescued women, covering them with their coats to keep them warm until the fire department and rescue squad arrived. Once paramedics arrived, both women were transported to a local hospital and treated for injuries. The team onsite included: John Kearse (VNG), Benjamin Sparks (SEC), Henry Regalado (SEC), Ryan Nottingham (SEC), Emilio Amaya (SEC), Daniel Murillo (SEC).</p>
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>Two women survived a house fire and were transported to a local hospital to be treated for injuries. This could have not been possible without the quick and heroic actions of our employees. Southeast Connection’s customer Virginia Natural Gas put out a press release about the incident here. The story received significant media coverage on TV and in newspapers in the Virginia Beach/Norfolk area.</p>
<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>Everything we do revolves around safety, from our operating procedures to interaction with the community where we work and serve. This amazing team was a clear example of that, and when they saw a need there was never a second thought or hesitation about rushing to help. Had they not been at the right place at the right time, the outcome could have been very different. This incredible story also helps to positively build the reputation of the natural gas industry and the caliber of people employed in our industry.</p>
<p>Supporting Documents</p>	<p>Click to view.</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Associate Member</p>

Nomination MA-6	
SGA Member Company Name	Atmos Energy
Program Name	<i>Bremen House Fire Rescue</i>
Program Description	<p>Late in the evening on Friday, Dec. 10th a massive, long tracking tornado tore a path across Western Kentucky leaving behind a path of devastation and destruction. All across Western Kentucky, Atmos employees began to respond to the damage-torn areas and worked to eliminate hazardous conditions all throughout the night and the next day. Three of those employees, James Craig, Bill Stanley and Darrel Smith, were working in Bremen, Ky, trying to shut off gas to homes that had been destroyed by the tornado.</p> <p>Around 2 am on Saturday morning, Bill and Darrel noticed smoke and flames coming from the garage of a nearby house. Bill, James, and Darrel proceeded to approach the home and investigate to make sure it was empty. Neighbors alerted them that there was an elderly couple that lived in the home and they believed them to still be inside.</p> <p>Bremen is a small Kentucky town and is covered primarily by its volunteer fire department. The Atmos employees alerted any nearby volunteer firefighters they could but realized that response amid the devastation and debris was going to be delayed significantly. Wanting to be sure the residents of the home were safe, the men decided to take action.</p> <p>They begin to beat and kick on the back door to try and alert anyone inside. Having received no response from the residents, Bill used a wrench to break the glass on the door, unlock the door and enter the home that was now filling with flames and smoke.</p> <p>Upon entering the home, the men found an elderly couple still sleeping inside. After waking the couple, the men begin to assist them in gathering their pets and evacuating the home. Looking back on that moment Bill said, “I know they were probably still half asleep and confused, but I don’t think they really understood how serious the situation was.” James agreed and recalled, “The woman kept asking about her dogs and was trying to gather up medicine and belongings.”</p> <p>Darrel and James assisted in gathering the couple’s pets and helping the elderly man out of the house to a safe distance. At one point the elderly woman proceeded to go back up the stairs of the home to look for more belongings to carry out. James followed the woman upstairs pleading and insisting that it was time to evacuate. “At one point she looked at me and said, ‘Is it</p>

	<p>really that serious?” James said. “I literally had put my hands on her shoulders and turned her around to show her the smoke and flames that were visible in the room down the hall.” It was at that point the woman agreed to evacuate and was led out of the home by James.</p> <p>In the moments that followed the house would be taken over by the fire and eventually burn to the ground. It is uncertain what caused the fire but one thing everyone can agree on is the fact that if it had not been for the action taken by these Atmos employees the couple inside may have never woken up again. James remembers, “The fire was spreading towards the stairs. It wouldn’t have taken very long before the only way for them to get out would have been gone.”</p>
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>Two lives were saved.</p>
<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>House fire rescue</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Distribution</p>

<p>Nomination MA-7</p>	
<p>SGA Member Company Name</p>	<p>Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline</p>
<p>Program Name</p>	<p><i>Lane Ewing</i></p>
<p>Program Description</p>	<p>Safety should be everyone’s priority, whether you are at work or at home. You never know when you will find yourself in a situation where the many aspects of safety may end up saving your life or the life of someone around you. Lane Ewing was in this situation where it had been snowing/sleeting all day. As He left the Purcell Office to head home, it started sleeting even harder. As Lane was getting ready to merge onto I-35, he looked over to his left to see a full-size car rolling down the hill just past the overpass. He immediately stopped to help. He took his first aid kit and ran over to the wrecked car. As Lane approached the scene with caution, he could see the man driving the car was trying to get out the driver’s side, which was all smashed in. Lane immediately asked the gentleman to stop moving and to notify him what all was hurting in the case the gentleman was injured badly enough that he shouldn’t be moving. After Lane asked him a few simple questions like what his full name was and where he was headed, Lane realized he was still alert and aware of his</p>

	<p>surroundings. As Lane assisted him from his vehicle, he noticed the gentleman’s body was shaking very badly. Lane asked him again what all was hurting now that he was up and walking around. The gentleman stated he had terrible back pain, so Lane had him sit down. After a couple of minutes, Lane realized it was cold enough that they needed to do something quickly before the gentleman got too cold. Lane assisted him to his truck where he could be warm until an ambulance arrived. Help soon arrived and transported the gentleman to the hospital, and at that time one of the State Troopers mentioned that if Lane hadn’t had prior knowledge of first aid and assisting him safely that the outcome could have been a lot worse. This goes to show that anything can happen in an instant so knowing how to react when things change for the worse could save your own life or the life of someone else. With Lane’s prior training in Safety and First Aid, he was able to help this man when he needed it most. The gentleman even called him the next day to give me an update on his condition and to thank him for saving his life.</p>
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>He aided in saving the life of an individual</p>
<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>It was not only a great look for Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline but the whole pipeline industry as a whole</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Transmission</p>

<p>Nomination MA-8</p>	
<p>SGA Member Company Name</p>	<p>Miller Pipeline</p>
<p>Program Name</p>	<p>Catch ONE</p>
<p>Program Description</p>	<p>The crew was boring in main in Dayton, OH, when the foreman noticed a car pull in a driveway, the door opened, and no one got out. Justin could see the man’s head, laying back on the seat with his leg out the door. He told a crew member to check the man and see if he was responsive. The man was not and was turning grey, so they quickly called 911. While talking to 911, the crew was instructed to pull the man out of the car, lay him on his side, and rub his chest hard with their knuckles in his chest. The crew did this till the fire department showed up. When they arrived, they gave him a shot of Narcan. With the crew’s quick response and following the instructions of the 911 operator, the crew helped save the life of this husband and father of two.</p>

	<p>Employees involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Justin Wilhelm, Foreman ● Don Saff, Operator ● Roger Fleming, Laborer ● Dakota Powell, Bore Foreman ● Michael Shuttleworth, Bore Operator ● Dustin Stapleton, Hydro-Vac Operator
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>Catch ONE is our employee recognition program tied to our ONE Mission and our core values. A Catch ONE occurs when an employee or team completes an action that embodies one or more core values. A Catch ONE is an action going above and beyond our daily job functions, resulting in a positive outcome in the project, team, or community. The program is designed as a way for our customers, supervisors, the general public, and co-workers to express appreciation towards our employees.</p>
<p>Supporting Documents</p>	<p>Click to view.</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Distribution</p>