



2024 SGA Awards Winners: Meritorious Action

Entry: Otto McMillan

Three Times a Hero

Your Company: Duke Energy-Piedmont Natural Gas

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Otto supports his team, contract partners, customers, family, friends, and the stranger down the street all with the same level of active caring that makes us extremely proud to have him as a part of Piedmont Natural Gas. In 2023, Otto was recognized as a Duke Energy Everyday Hero for his three, recorded, heroic acts. First, he saved a 7-year old girl and her family from a house fire that was starting down the street from the job site he was working on. The fire battalion commander stated that if Otto had not acted the way he did, the house could have burned down completely. His other two acts were serious car crashes that he stumbled upon during his daily commute. In both instances he immediately stopped, helped those that were a part of the crash, and kept the scene safe until emergency personal arrived. In the words of Otto, "He cannot turn a blind eye" and we are all so grateful for that. I have attached a write up of each of these specific events on the next screen that was done as part of Duke Energy's Everyday Hero Recognition Program.

[Read the full story.](#)

Entry: Larin Trenary

Spire service technician's quick action protects lives and property before fire could spread

Your Company: Spire

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Larin Trenary, a Spire service technician based in Monett, Missouri, was leaving a meter change job on Feb. 29 when he noticed a fire burning in an aluminum trash can next to a nearby house. The flames had spread to the home and the man who was working outside didn't seem to notice.

That's when Larin, who before joining Spire had been a firefighter in Joplin, Missouri for nine years, leapt into action. Larin instructed the homeowner to call 911 as he grabbed the fire extinguisher from his service van. The homeowner seemed confused about what was going on, so Larin called 911 himself as he started to extinguish the fire in the trash can and along the side of the house.

Once he had the flames under control in that area, he noticed that there were also flames on the other side of the home's porch where a gas can sat. He quickly ran to put out that fire and another that had sprung up and was burning an electric weed eater, also right next to the house. At about the same time as Larin's fire extinguisher ran out, a police vehicle arrived and the officer used his fire extinguisher to help clean up some of the remaining hot spots.

Larin noticed a woman inside the house through the open door. She was attempting to fill jugs of water to help fight the fire, but the home was now filled with smoke. Larin assisted the woman out of the home to fresh air. At about this time, the fire department arrived and took over. Larin didn't have much opportunity to speak with the homeowner couple, but they did quickly thank him for his help.

"My instincts and training just kicked in." Larin said. "I was just lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time because we were changing meters in the neighborhood. In fact, I had just changed the meter at that home a few days before. I'm glad I was there and could help."

Impact:

Larin's quick thinking and immediate action resulted in the home being saved from serious damage and the homeowners from possibly being injured. This is just one example of how Spire employees are working daily to keep our customers and communities safe.

[Photo](#)

Entry: Andrew Armijo, Luis Lopez, and Leroy Martinez

Making a Difference: Midland Employees Assist Fallen Elderly Resident

Your Company: Atmos Energy

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Atmos Energy employees Andrew Armijo, Luis Lopez, and Leroy Martinez had completed a neighborhood leak repair on Aug. 31 and were headed to lunch when they saw an elderly gentleman get out of his truck in the parking lot of a townhome community and suddenly fall to his knees. He was in shorts and on all fours on the hot, 100-degree asphalt. The man tried to pick himself up several times but gave up. Two female neighbors came over and tried to pick him up but couldn't. Armijo asked one of the ladies to bring a chair from their patio. In the meantime, Lopez called 911 and Martinez deployed a 10 x 10 plastic canopy from his truck. The three employees put the canopy over the chair for shade, then gently picked up the man and put him in the chair under the canopy. They tried talking with him, but he couldn't speak and was very pale. They gave him some bottled water and put wet towels around his neck and on top of his head. The man's stepson soon arrived.

The stepson only lived two blocks away, but said by the time he got there, the Atmos Energy employees had taken care of everything: water bottles and wet towels and shade. Time was of the essence, and they didn't hesitate one bit in helping him. He said there was no telling how long his stepfather would have laid on that asphalt if the employees hadn't been there, and that they treated his stepfather like he was their own dad. The elderly man recuperated in the hospital for a week and is back home now and doing well.

Heroic actions like this emphasize Atmos Energy's commitment to safety and passion for community. The natural gas employees were able to stay calm and follow safety training procedures learned at an enterprise service center, while inspiring trust among and making a difference for their neighbors – key parts of the company's AtmoSpirit culture. Andrew, Luis and Leroy proved that safety is not just what we do, it's who we are.

Entry: Angus King

Your Company: Summit Utilities

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

We are honored to nominate Angus King for the Southern Gas Association's (SGA) Meritorious Action Recognition, highlighting an act of bravery that aligns with Summit Utilities, Inc.'s (Summit's) core value of safety. Angus's quick thinking and courageous response not only saved a life but also exemplified the instinctive drive to protect that is deeply ingrained in Summit's culture.

During a team meal at a local restaurant, a moment designed for relaxation and camaraderie was suddenly disrupted. The staff's urgent cries alerted the team to a dire emergency unfolding. Without a moment's hesitation, Angus leapt into action when he noticed an elderly gentleman in distress, unable to breathe. Demonstrating remarkable composure and decisiveness, Angus performed the Heimlich maneuver, swiftly dislodging the food obstruction and restoring the gentleman's breathing. His actions, undertaken even before many could fully grasp the situation, were a direct testament to his readiness to assist and protect those in need.

Following the intervention, Angus confirmed the arrival of emergency services, then modestly returned to his table, a reflection of his humility and the embodiment of a true hero who believes in doing right without expectation of recognition. This incident not only showcased Angus's bravery but also resonated with Summit's overarching commitment to the safety and well-being of our community.

Safety extends beyond our operational mandate into every aspect of our lives, including the well-being of those around us. Angus's actions serve as a powerful illustration of this principle, highlighting the importance of being vigilant and proactive in all situations. His intervention not only prevented a potential tragedy but also underscored the significance of individual responsibility in ensuring public safety.

Angus's humility in the aftermath of his heroic act further demonstrates his admirable character. By nominating Angus King for the SGA Meritorious Action Recognition, we aim to celebrate a member of our team who acted with exceptional courage and integrity. This nomination reflects not just Angus's personal character but also the collective values that drive us at Summit. His actions are a beacon of the safety culture we strive to foster, a reminder of the impact one individual can have on the lives of others, and a call to all to embody the values of vigilance, compassion, and courage.

Through this nomination, we express our deepest admiration for Angus's heroism and our commitment to upholding safety as our paramount concern, both within and beyond the scope of our professional endeavors.

[Photo](#)

Entry: Austin Welch

Creating Human Outreach Services of Tulsa (HOST)

Your Company: The Williams Companies

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Austin Welch, a Tulsa native and young Williams employee, saw a pressing need in his community and created the organization Human Outreach Services of Tulsa (HOST). HOST is a community-oriented service and relief organization dedicated to aiding homeless, at-risk, and low-income populations. Established in 2021, HOST initially focused on providing meals to individuals barred from accessing shelters due to stringent criteria. Since its inception, HOST has significantly expanded its scope, offering a range of essential services including distribution of feminine hygiene products, food, clothing, blankets, and sleeping bags.

To date, HOST has delivered 2,000 homecooked meals to vulnerable individuals within the community. Beyond direct aid, HOST is committed to enhancing public spaces in low-income areas. Through collaborative efforts with the Tulsa Department of Parks and Recreation, HOST has undertaken the cleaning and revitalization of 12 parks in 2023, removing over 4,000 pounds of refuse. This initiative aims to restore neglected and underserved areas, fostering a sense of community well-being. After years of grassroots service, HOST filed for incorporation in August of 2023, and received its 501(c)(3) exempt status in the following month.

Volunteers of HOST have been busy and only expect to continue their efforts in helping the unhoused community in Tulsa. In 2023, they donated 400 hours of their time as well as delivered over 800 hot meals to Tulsans that didn't know when they would have another meal. This work led by Austin has and will continue to help people get a reprieve from hunger, weather events, and heat exhaustion.



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Entry: Jordan Sutton and Crew (John Mahan, John Guerra, Michael Lichtenberger)

Your Company: Miller Pipeline

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Miller Pipeline's Catch ONE program is designed to allow customers, supervisors, the general public, and co-workers to express appreciation for Miller's employees' actions. A Catch ONE occurs when an employee or team completes an action that embodies one or more of Miller's core values and results in a positive outcome in the project, team, or community. It is an action that goes above and beyond daily job functions.

While finishing the day before the weekend, Jordan and his crew witnessed a motorcycle crash on the highway. They quickly responded and jumped into action. Jordan Sutton provided first aid support while instructing his crew to get him a tourniquet and splint for the man's mangled leg. While Jordan was installing a tourniquet and tending to the man's wounds, his crew took to putting fires out caused by the crash, removing the motorcycle and wreckage from the highway, and controlling traffic so first responders could arrive as quickly as possible. First responders arrived and let them know their actions likely saved the man's life. This was a great example of this crew's commitment to Miller Pipeline's core value of safety.



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Entry: Stephen “Ricky” Smith

Your Company: Dominion Energy South Carolina

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

Stephen “Ricky” Smith has been a Gas Operations Technician for DESC Gas for 14 years. Ricky has also been a volunteer fireman for 20 years, serving his local fire department.

Ricky was traveling home from working in Myrtle Beach, when he saw a vehicle run off the road and through a ditch before hitting 3 parked vehicles. Ricky stopped to check on the driver and to see if he could provide any assistance. As Ricky approached the scene, he noticed the driver struggling to pull someone from the back seat of the vehicle. Ricky and another bystander helped remove the driver’s disabled son from the vehicle. And not a moment too soon before flames engulfed the vehicle.

Ricky used some rags to rest under the driver’s son’s head to help stabilize him until EMS arrived. The driver was not injured, and the son only had minor cuts and scrapes.



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Entry: Jason Haynes

CPR Training Saves a Life

Your Company: Chesapeake Utilities Corporation

Please describe the heroic action or quick thinking that saved the lives of others.

On what began as a typical workday, Jason Haynes, meter technician with Chesapeake Utilities Corporation subsidiary Elkton Gas, witnessed a person passing out, dropping to the ground, and striking their head on the pavement at a gas station. He immediately went to their aid and discovered that the individual was suffering from a severe head injury and labored breathing. He called out to a gas station attendant, asking them to call 9-1-1.

Waiting for an ambulance to arrive, Jason Haynes stayed with the stranger, who was unconscious. Immediately, he noticed that the man wasn't breathing, and he quickly checked for a pulse. Detecting none, he put his Company-provided CPR training to work and began chest compressions, continuing CPR until he was sure the person had regained a pulse. Shortly after, emergency medical technicians arrived to treat the individual. When they left for the hospital, his pulse oxygen readings had risen from 48% to 70%.

Performing CPR on the stranger was his first inclination, but not an easy one, as his only other experience in administering CPR involved to his own mother, who did not survive. Haynes pushed past the difficult memory to assist the fallen man.

According to the American Heart Association, CPR can double or triple the chance of survival from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest if performed immediately. Haynes' quick action that morning was indeed lifesaving.

Protecting people, safeguarding communities, and securing assets are at the heart of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation's safety culture. The company provides energy to approximately 310,000 distribution customers and thousands of commercial and industrial applications in nine states across the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern regions of the United States. All operations employees receive extensive safety training that includes the American Heart Association's Heartsaver first aid, CPR and AED course.

David Baldinger, instructor for Chesapeake Utilities' Heartsaver training program, shared his perspective on Haynes' heroic effort: "This event truly shows how important safety training is to an organization. The fact that our employee was able to come to the aid of a citizen so they could return to their family is beyond comprehension. There is no substitute for preparedness." "Jason's response is a great example of how our team members make a meaningful difference everywhere they live and work. It takes a special kind of person to respond the way he did in this situation," said Brian Yost, gas operations supervisor. "He truly demonstrated our company value of putting people first and keeping them safe."

[Photo](#) | [Photo](#)