



2025 SGA Awards: Meritorious Action Honorees

Nominee: Jason Wheeler

Your Company: Atmos Energy

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

Hurricane Helene, a Category Four storm, made landfall in the Big Bend area of the Florida Gulf Coast last September, causing unprecedented flooding, hundreds of fatalities, and billions of dollars in damage. In response to the natural disaster, donations, resources, and volunteers rushed to aid those impacted by the storm. Among those volunteers was Jason Wheeler, a senior service technician in Monroe, La., who headed to Florida motivated to Make a Difference.

Before leaving for Port Charlotte, Fla., Jason coordinated with other local employees to donate and collect resources like shoes, clothes, and toiletries to bring with him. He then headed to the coast, using paid time off to help those in need. Jason spent six days with volunteers gutting and demolishing homes and organizing furniture and personal belongings for homeowners to sort and reclaim. In addition to his physical labor, Jason also spent time with those affected by the storm, praying with the homeowners he helped.

While volunteering, Jason assisted an elderly woman who had lost nearly all her belongings. Because of the generosity of our teammates in Monroe, Jason had the resources to provide her with shoes and clothing that were her size, a small offering that goes a long way in the wake of tragedy. While Jason was grateful for the opportunity to serve, those he assisted were grateful that he made the more than 900-mile journey to help when they needed it.

At Atmos Energy, our people are the practitioners of our AtmoSpirit principles. Jason exemplified the principle of Make a Difference, working with other volunteers to clear 110 homes over six days. Our people, like Jason, living out these principles we hold dear, play a key role in Fueling Safe and Thriving Communities.



Nominee: Donnie Pierson

Your Company: Atmos Energy

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

Shortly after lunch on an ordinary work day, Donnie was working alongside one of his counterparts when he noticed his colleague appeared unwell. Donnie approached his teammate to see if he could help and inquired about how he was feeling. His teammate replied he felt nauseated and had pain in his arm and chest. Donnie also noted his colleague appeared pale and "clammy". Donnie had recently attended CPR training and immediately recognized these as symptoms of a possible heart attack. Donnie reassured his teammate, made sure he was comfortable and immediately began seeking medical attention. Donnie's teammate was examined at a medical facility and it was determined he had significant arterial blockage which required immediate surgery to save his life. Donnie's quick thinking, actions and training saved the life of his friend and teammate.



Nominees: Klay Allday & Bruce Camp

Your Company: Boardwalk Pipelines

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

Klay Allday (25 years with Boardwalk) and Bruce Camp (48 years with Boardwalk) are Board Operators at the Petal Gas Storage Facility. We are incredibly fortunate to have them at Boardwalk, consistently identifying hazards and ensuring safe operations throughout their daily activities. Klay and Bruce are always willing to offer their vast knowledge and experience to foster a safe environment.

On the evening of September 15th, around 9:00 PM, Klay was returning from an off-site run when he noticed headlights on the railroad tracks as he entered the Boardwalk facility. Concerned, he kept an eye on the lights, realizing the vehicle was in an area where it shouldn't be.

Recognizing the potential danger, Klay immediately contacted Bruce to report the situation. He instructed Bruce to call 911 and notify the train company to halt any approaching trains.

While Bruce took action on the communication front, Klay approached the vehicle to assist the driver, an elderly man who appeared confused and possibly unwell. Klay managed to guide the driver to safety off the tracks just as he noticed a train approaching.

Klay quickly called Bruce again to alert him about the imminent train. Bruce then relayed the urgent situation to 911 and North Fork Southern Railroad, successfully stopping the approaching train in time to avert a collision.

This could have ended in a tragic incident, but thanks to the effective teamwork of Klay and Bruce, a potential disaster was avoided. The vehicle was only about 50 yards from nearby loaded railcars carrying liquid petroleum products, making the situation even more critical.

Their swift thinking, immediate actions, and effective communication exemplified courage and commitment to safety, highlighting Boardwalk's dedication to the well-being of its employees, communities, and the environment.

Nominees: Steven Briolo, Charles Martin, Nicholas Couvillon

Your Company: Energy Transfer

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

On September 12th, 2024, a four-person team was dispatched to inspect Energy Transfer's offshore platform following a hurricane. While on the platform, one of the employees experienced an urgent and potentially life-threatening medical emergency. Without hesitation, his coworkers sprang into action, administering life-saving CPR while communicating the situation back to shore. It is estimated that they performed CPR for upwards of twenty minutes until their coworker regained consciousness.

The team's quick communication secured a medical helicopter to transport the employee to an emergency trauma center. They stayed by their coworker's side until he departed the facility and consistently checked in with him and his family in the hours, days, and weeks that followed. The employee is expected to make a full recovery, which wouldn't have been possible without the heroic efforts of this offshore team.

A normal day at work turned into an extraordinary demonstration of compassion and camaraderie. We are submitting this team for recognition not only for their life-saving actions but also for their bravery and quick thinking. We never expect to find ourselves in situations like this, but on September 12th, this team did, and without hesitation, they united to save their friend. Lives were changed by these men, and we will never be able to express our gratitude for their quick thinking and life-saving actions.

Nominees: Jose Leal-Huerta and Valentin Quintero

Your Company: Miller Pipeline

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

We have been working in Clayton, CA, for the past year and a half, where this event took place. While Jose Leal-Huerta and Valentin Quintero were getting lunch at a sandwich shop on break, a customer became agitated with the young lady who took his order because it wasn't prepared properly. The customer began yelling, cursing, and causing a scene over his sandwich. The owner, and the father of the young girl, came to her rescue. Still, it escalated instead of de-escalating the situation. Pushing and shoving began, and the confrontation continued in the parking lot. A fight broke out, and the owner knocked the customer to the ground and was beating on him. Valentin interfered and pulled the owner off the customer, breaking up the fight but realized the owner had been stabbed in the neck and arm and was bleeding profusely from his neck. Valentin helped the owner to the ground as 911 was being called. Jose Leal was in his truck and caught some of this on video, but seeing how badly he was bleeding, Jose jumped out of his truck, removed his shirt, and applied direct pressure to the wound in the neck until EMTs arrived, which was about 6 minutes. Jose has first aid & CPR training. If Valentin and Jose had not interfered, things would have gotten worse. Also, Jose knowing what to do saved this man's life as he would have bled out and died if Jose hadn't applied direct pressure to the wound; medical personnel said his jugular vein was cut. Many texts have come to Jose from the family to thank him and Valentin for getting involved and saving the shop owner's life. The owner is doing well. He is out of the hospital and has reopened his sandwich shop. Valentin and Jose will be getting a free sandwich anytime they want one. Thank you for protecting our community, even in the face of danger.

Nominee: Jordan Kidd

Your Company: Miller Pipeline

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

Jordan was traveling back to the job on I-270 in Columbus, Ohio. As he entered a long tunnel at an exit ramp, he noticed a lady lying in the middle of the driving lanes and an overturned car on the shoulder. Jordan realized the lady had been ejected. He swerved to avoid running her over and came to a stop. He immediately stopped several vehicles and began first aid on the injured lady. Jordan called 911 and continued assisting as she went in and out of consciousness. Another driver stopped and also began helping with first aid. Jordan stayed on the scene until paramedics and firefighters took over the scene. First, Jordan did a great job being alert and focused while driving. Entering a dark tunnel on a bright day makes it very hard to notice hazards ahead. No one would have expected a body lying in the roadway while coming into the tunnel. Second, thank you, Jordan, for getting involved. Many folks would have driven by simply because they were too busy to assist or too cold to help. Jordan got traffic stopped and made a safe area around the driver. He also called 911 and performed first aid on the injured lady. Jordan did all this not because he wanted credit but because it was the right thing to do. That lady is someone's wife and/or daughter and could have been any one of ours. If someone I care about were in that situation, I pray someone like Jordan would step up and help her out rather than drive by. Jordan embodies all of Miller Pipeline's core values, and he is highly regarded by everyone who knows him.

by WSYX Staff | Wed, August 14th 2024 at 11:08 AM

I-270 at SR-161 NE Tunnel 08/14/24 11:02:09



SR 161 Eastbound ramp to Southbound I-270 is closed August 14, 2024 (OHGO)



TOPICS: CRASH RAMP CLOSED SR 161 EASTBOUND 270 SOUTHBOUND EAST SIDE CREWS

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WSYX) — The ramp from SR 161 Eastbound heading towards 270 Southbound on the east side is closed due to a crash. Please find a different route as crews clear the area.

Nominees: Brian Hatley, Troy Turner, Jr., Dillon Wilcox

Your Company: PolyPipe, LLC

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

On the morning of September 27, 2024, Erwin, Tennessee, faced an unforeseen disaster. As Tropical Storm Helene made landfall, relentless rainfall swelled the Nolichucky Watershed, flooding the Erwin Industrial Park within hours. When PolyPipe received the emergency evacuation notice, water had already crested Industrial Road, blocking the only exit.

Yet, in the face of rising, fast-moving floodwaters, PolyPipe employees displayed extraordinary courage. Every employee made it to safety—an outcome not shared by all in the industrial park that day. Many in our community lost their lives, and we grieve for them. But in the midst of devastation, our employees became heroes, saving co-workers, truck drivers, and employees from neighboring businesses.

With the only roadway out submerged, employees were forced to head east, only to be stopped by a chain-link fence at the dead end. As floodwaters rose rapidly, a PolyPipe employee used diagonal pliers to cut through the fence, creating an emergency escape route to Interstate 25. Others moved obstacles, pushed stranded vehicles, and guided cars through the opening. Another employee coordinated with a local business owner who used his tractor to clear a path onto the railroad maintenance roads, providing a critical way out. As conditions worsened, PolyPipe employees risked their own safety to ensure that no one was left behind.

Meanwhile, three PolyPipe employees, along with a box truck driver, became trapped in the parking lot as debris blocked their exit. With nowhere to go, they climbed to higher ground—first onto pipes, then onto their trucks—as floodwaters engulfed the area. The truck driver, unable to swim, remained inside his vehicle, growing increasingly nervous.

As the flood rose, the employees jumped onto floating pipe bundles. When the box truck began to shift, they knew time was running out. One employee swam to the truck, pulled the driver out, and directed him onto the floating pipe. The four men clung to each other as the current carried them downriver toward dangerous rapids. At a critical moment, an eddy current spun them backward into a group of trees, allowing them to grab hold and stabilize. Pipe bundles began piling up around them, threatening to trap them beneath the rising water. Using their combined strength, they pushed the pipes away and climbed onto an embankment.

From there, another PolyPipe employee, risking his own safety, drove back to throw them a rope and pull them to safety.

The events of that day are a striking testament to PolyPipe's values and the selflessness of our employees. Their quick thinking and unwavering commitment to others proved lifesaving—not only did they escape, but they saved multiple lives in the process.

Though the flood brought devastation, the courage of PolyPipe's employees stood as a beacon of excellence. Through preparation, decisive leadership, and an unbreakable team spirit, we turned what could have been a tragedy into a powerful story of resilience and heroism.



Nominees: Nick Young, James Paul, Stan Willis, Brandon Hamby

Your Company: Southeast Connections

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

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, a storm that left entire communities in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee devastated and without power, crews from Southeast Connections mobilized quickly to provide support wherever it was needed most. Among them was Brandon Hamby and his crew, who were working in Augusta, GA, clearing trees and debris to reopen access routes for emergency responders.

While working, a woman ran out of her home in distress, screaming for help. Her husband was on life support inside, and the storm had knocked out power to their home. Without immediate access to electricity, his condition was deteriorating rapidly, and no emergency crews could reach them due to the extensive storm damage and blocked roads.

Without hesitation, Brandon and his team sprang into action. They backed a work truck equipped with a generator up to the house and powered the man's life-sustaining medical equipment, stabilizing him until further help could arrive. At the same time, the crew began clearing a path for emergency responders, removing massive trees and debris—some of it under dangerous conditions—to open up the only access road to the home.

The crew worked tirelessly, cutting and clearing nearly three miles of road, allowing an ambulance to finally reach the man and transport him to the care he urgently needed. Their quick thinking, technical expertise, and calm under pressure were instrumental in saving this man's life.

This is just one of the many stories to come out of the response to Hurricane Helene, but it is a shining example of the bravery, compassion, and commitment shown by Southeast Connections employees. Brandon and his crew did not seek recognition—they simply saw a need and acted. Their response reflects the highest standard of integrity and courage in the face of crisis. In moments when every second matters, their heroic actions made all the difference!

[Watch the video.](#)

Nominee: Brett Stewart

Your Company: TC Energy

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

On Friday, February 14th, TC Energy Pipeline technician Brett Stewart was traveling westbound on Ohio Route 140 when the car in front of him hit a patch of ice. The car then lost control, traveled off the west side of the road, flipped, and landed in Hales Creek. Brett pulled over near the location where the car exited the road and observed the car flipped on its top in the creek. He then jumped into the creek, opened the door of the vehicle, and assisted the woman out of the car and out of the creek and into his truck. She was stuck in the vehicle, and the water was slowly filling the vehicle to the point where it was over her head. They then traveled up the road until cell phone service was available, and they called 911. Brett then took the woman back to the location of the accident and waited for first responders.

