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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Nov. 19

# Two win honor for heroics

By Lisa Hatfield

The Donald Wescott Fire Department board learned at its Nov. 19 meeting that Wescott EMT Jared Whitely and AMR paramedic Robert Good earned the Gold Honor for risking their own safety to extricate a victim from a car wreck. The directors also discussed the 2014 budget and plans for continued merger discussions with Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District. They went into executive session twice to discuss personnel issues at the Nov. 19 meeting.

### Gold Honor for Saving Life

Whitely and Good were awarded the Gold Honor for Saving Life by the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on Nov. 9, because of "their willingness to put service above self with their act of courage."

Good and Whitely discovered an accident that had just occurred in the early hours of May 16, 2012. A vehicle had hit a light pole head-on at high speed, the engine was on fire, and the single occupant was trapped and severely injured. The Gold Honor recognizes those who display significant heroism and face substantial risk to their own life in saving or attempting to save a patient, according to Assistant Chief Scott Ridings.

### Chief's report

Chief Vinny Burns said that the Black Forest merger committee still had not met due to various scheduling issues, but they hope to "kick it up" in January to discuss merger options, budget items, and a possible timeline. He said the safe route to discuss was the fire authority model, since there is no risk. The two staffs are already working together on operations training, and it's going well, Burns said.

Burns acknowledged the "good work" of the firefighters and staff who spent money out of their own pockets for signs and brochures in an effort to pass the mill levy increase, and spent their off-duty hours canvassing neighborhoods. "I'm proud of them. They took this to heart. It just didn't work out so well."

Chairman Scott Campbell said, "We have a job now to do with the budget that we have for next year." The final results for Wescott's mill levy ballot issue for an increase from 7 to 11 mills were 2,813 yes votes and 3,287 no votes. For all election results see: [www.elpasoelections.com/2013Coordinated/results.html](http://www.elpasoelections.com/2013Coordinated/results.html)

Burns said that the chief's new vehicle purchase had been postponed.

Assistant Chief Scott Ridings said calls increased 2.7 percent from 182 in October 2012 to 187 calls in October 2013. AMR took 47 of those calls, and 29 were mutual aid calls.

### 2014 budget discussion

The board began discussing next year's budget two months ago, and a final zero-balance 2014 budget will be decided on at the Dec. 3 board meeting. By that time the final projected 2014 property tax numbers should be available, Campbell said.

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