



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE BUSINESS SUPPORTS FIRST RESPONDERS

Uniontown, PA –In the wake of a nearby tragedy, a Fayette County business is working to make first responders' jobs a lot safer.

Black Diamond Equipment Rental of Uniontown recently donated a portable, industrial lighting stand to the Dunbar Volunteer Fire Department, for use when responding to emergencies and during community events.

The donation was inspired by a tragic accident last month, in which a first responder was killed on Interstate 70 in neighboring Westmoreland County. Rostraver West Newton Emergency Services paramedic Matthew Smelser was treating patients at the scene of an accident along the busy roadway, when another vehicle struck and killed him before sunrise.

Black Diamond co-owner Dave Mahokey, a Dunbar Township resident, said protecting his community's first responders is a cause he cares deeply for.

"I was born and raised in nearby Everson, so growing up in a small town, the fire whistle was right outside my window. They used to blow it for curfew when I was a kid, so you knew your firefighters," Mahokey said. "In those days, everybody pitched in and did things for their neighbors. That's just the way small towns worked. It's really tough in Fayette County right now, and these fire departments hustle to raise the money to serve their communities, so it's nice to do something for them in return."

Mahokey said he and his business partners, Jim Jones, Chad Teasdale, Jono Menhart and Nick Onderko, were really affected by the Interstate 70 accident and immediately worried about their local fire department.

"Life is very short and these guys are so good at what they do. They take it so seriously, which is commendable of all our volunteer fire departments, but accidents do happen on the job," he said.

Dunbar firefighters typically respond to rural areas with limited lighting. At overnight emergencies, fire truck lights, headlights and flashlights are often the only things illuminating the scenes, and Mahokey said wearing reflective gear only goes so far.

"This is basically a mobile street light with four lights that can be elevated to cover an entire scene if they get into a dangerous situation on a back road," Mahokey said. "They can also use it to light their parking lot during events, so it's not something they'll use every day, but they might need it."

Fayette County Commissioner Scott Dunn facilitated the donation during a small ceremony at the fire department; after which the Black Diamond representatives were given a tour of the firehouse.

“Safety of our first responders is one of the most important issues,” Dunn said. “Our volunteer firefighters are just that - volunteers. As they dedicate their time and effort for our safety, we want them to make it home safely. These are our neighbors and friends that we rely on.”

A Dunbar resident and former borough council president, Dunn has worked hard to recognize the fire department as the “backbone” of his community.

“To be able to play a small role in helping our heroes stay safe was gratifying, to say the least. For Black Diamond to reach out, it says a lot to me about the quality of people who work there,” he said. “We have great, hard-working people in Fayette County who will always come together to support each other. Black Diamond was no different and lived up to that standard. This is one case in which the words ‘thank you’ aren’t enough.”

Mahokey said Black Diamond would like to do more for the county’s first responders and pride themselves on supporting community service organizations.

“Since the donation, we’ve been inundated with requests for other departments’ needs, so we’re trying to help as many as we can and as often as we can,” he said. “As Mother Teresa said, ‘If you can’t feed a hundred people, feed just one.’ There are a lot of generous people in Fayette County, and that generosity starts with small acts. We can’t do it all, but we can start with one.”

To learn more about Black Diamond Equipment Rental, visit www.bd-er.com. To learn more about the Dunbar Volunteer Fire Department, search “Dunbar Vol Fire Company” on Facebook.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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