



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY V.O.A.D. LEADERS EARN STATE AWARDS

Uniontown, PA – Two Fayette County volunteers recently received top honors during the Keystone Emergency Management Association’s annual conference.

Greg Crossley, Chairman of the Fayette County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (V.O.A.D.), and Roy Shipley Jr., Fayette County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director and V.O.A.D. founder, received the Rev. Shirley Norman Memorial Award, for their exemplary commitment of service to others.

V.O.A.D. is an association of organizations that mitigate and alleviate the impact of disasters; provides a forum promoting cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration; and fosters more effective delivery of services to communities affected by disaster.

This year marks the first time two Shirley Norman Memorial Awards were presented, further distinguishing Fayette County’s reputation as a statewide leader in emergency preparedness.

Shipley said he met Rev. Norman in the late 1980s, when she worked with him through EMA and the American Red Cross to establish the Fayette County V.O.A.D. – one of the first in the state.

“I also had the pleasure to work with her during other disaster events through Church World Service. She provided me excellent on-the-job-training and, for years, she was my go-to person on V.O.A.D. and other local issues related to emergency services,” Shipley said. “I am honored to have received this award, along with Greg, as we strive to continue the good work Shirley started.”

Crossley said the award carries additional local significance, as Rev. Norman was a Marclay EMS paramedic in Markleysburg Borough; the local emergency management coordinator for both the borough and neighboring Henry Clay Township; and pastor of the community’s Union Chapel Church.

“She basically embodied the V.O.A.D. movement in all ways and that, I believe, is why she was held in such high regard by people across the state and even in other states,” Crossley said. “I was particularly honored to receive the award because of several things. With Shirley being from here, it means a great deal. That’s a point of pride. I, too, am a local emergency management coordinator and have been in the fire service 48 years, with some EMS involvement early on. I think she would be pleased to know the award came back to Fayette County, especially with Roy being a recipient. They worked together on disaster relief and have the same passion for it.”

Crossley also serves as chairman of the Western Pennsylvania V.O.A.D. and secretary of the Pennsylvania State V.O.A.D. He said the V.O.A.D. is something he “never would have envisioned” being involved with, but the need for help was there, and he was “baptized in fire” when the devastating 2016 flood occurred in Connellsville and Bullskin Township, not long after he became chair of the organization.

“In that process, I learned that V.O.A.D. is more of a calling and is one of those things that takes hold of you,” Crossley.

Looking forward to the V.O.A.D.’s plans for 2024, Crossley said the awards will help the organization in their outreach efforts.

“On the county level, we are trying to get some enthusiasm and engagement with the organization, and we’re making some progress, but I really want to see that grow,” Crossley said. “On the regional level, we have 24 counties, but several don’t have a V.O.A.D., so outreach is kind of a pet project of mine – offering any assistance that’s needed to try to get something started.”

For more information about the Fayette County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, visit www.fayettecountypa.org/728/VOAD or email uema@verizon.net.

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

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