



MSA Honors Chicago Fire Department With Fireslayer of the Year Award

Apr 15,2005

Response to Downtown High-Rise Fire Earns National Recognition

PITTSBURGH, April 15 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Firefighters from the Chicago Fire Department respond to thousands of calls each year. Their actions, however, during one particular call on December 6, 2004, have earned the department the Fireslayer of the Year (FOTY) Award, presented annually by global safety equipment manufacturer MSA (NYSE: MSA). The award was presented today to Chicago Fire Commissioner Cortez Trotter during a special ceremony at the annual Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC), held in Indianapolis, Ind.

The December call for the Chicago Fire Department was in response to a five-alarm high-rise fire at the 45-story LaSalle Bank Building in the heart of the city. Despite the many risks, hazards and uncertainties associated with high-rise fires, Chicago firefighters did not hesitate to charge up 29 flights of stairs to reach trapped victims in the inferno. Firefighters used the east stairwell to evacuate the building while reserving the west stairwell to fight the fire.

Several hundred victims were evacuated from the fire, which burned for more than five hours and severely damaged the 29th and 30th floors of the historic skyscraper. In all, 39 people, including 24 firefighters, were injured in the blaze. No lives were lost, however, due to the thorough training, tremendous dedication, and the teamwork of firefighters involved. The injured firefighters are expected to make a complete recovery and return to duty.

MSA created the Fireslayer of the Year Award in 2000 to honor the outstanding achievements by individual firefighters and departments, who serve as role models for others. At the presentation ceremony in Indianapolis, Commissioner Trotter was presented with a special leather New Yorker Cairns Helmet(R) and a commemorative plaque recognizing the department's acts of heroism. In addition to this award, MSA will make a \$5,000 donation on behalf of the Chicago Fire Department to the International Association of Fire Fighters' (IAFF) Burn Foundation, which benefits the Firefighters' National Children's Burn Camp and vital burn research, rehabilitation and education programs. To date, MSA has donated \$25,000 to the IAFF Burn Foundation in conjunction with the FOTY Award.

"MSA's goal is to recognize firefighters whose actions serve as models for dedication and bravery," said Eric Beck, marketing director for MSA's Safety Products Division. "The Fireslayer of the Year program is representative of MSA's long-standing association as a leader and innovator in the development of fire service safety equipment. As past award ceremonies have shown us, it is a very emotional event when this award is bestowed to a department because it represents such a high level of commitment and dedication among firefighters. In short, we are very proud to sponsor the premier recognition program to honor firefighting excellence."

Nominations for the award come from the fire service and votes are cast by members of the fire service. Their stories are shared by MSA as inspiration to all firefighters who share in a common mission ... to protect life.

About MSA

Established in 1914, MSA is the world's leading provider of quality products and services that protect people's health and safety and the environment. For more than 50 years, MSA has designed and manufactured cutting-edge, high-technology products for the fire service industry, including thermal imaging cameras, portable gas detection instruments, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and the best-selling CairnsHelmets(R) Fire Helmet brand of head protection. The fire service represents MSA's largest market. The company has annual sales of more than \$850 million, with manufacturing operations throughout the United States and more than 30 international locations.

SOURCE MSA

CONTACT: Mark Deasy of MSA,
+1-412-967-3357