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BFR restarts annual awards



Some of the many Christmas decorations in the front yard of the Dogan Cobb Municipal Building are Santa driving a fire truck and in the foreground a Nativity scene.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 13, 2016 at 3:47 p.m.

BRONSON – Bronson Fire Rescue Chief Dennis Russell presented awards to a number of people Monday night (Dec. 12) after at least a five-year interlude since the annual event.

The annual Christmas party has been happening either at firefighters' homes or restaurants. That banquet this year was in the Dogan Cobb Municipal Building. Chief Russell said this allows more family members to attend and at a lower cost to families than going to a restaurant.

The event was well attended, with 64 chairs at four tables snugly fitting in the Bronson Town Council Meeting Room.

Town Councilman Jason Hunt, who was in attendance with his wife Amanda and their daughter Makynna, is the liaison between the Fire Department and the Town Council. Jayden Hunt stayed home.

Town Councilwoman Katie Parks went to the banquet and awards ceremony. She was accompanied by her daughter Bailey Herring. Councilwoman Parks' other children were working or studying for college classes, she said.

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P.J. Whitehead, 10, stands next to the cakes and cupcakes he made for Bronson firefighters and guests. The Bronson Fire Station number in Levy County is 70.



The meal included five different flavors of chicken wings from the Wing House, as well as potato salad, fruits, cheeses, dips and for dessert, there was an amazing two-piece cake made by 10-year-old P.J. Whitehead, the son of Patrick Whitehead and Bronson Town Clerk Pamela Whitehead.

The youngster also made cupcakes.

The whole event was very friendly and down-home. The chief welcomed everyone and mentioned the people who helped make the banquet and awards ceremony a success.

In addition to the work by the young Mr. Whitehead, Chief Russell's fiancé Cindy Waters, BFR Lt. John Stephenson, volunteer Corey Palmer, Firefighter Christopher Kasper and Nick Barrett were mentioned as being very helpful.

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The room was very well decorated with firefighting themed items. Children who were present were given plastic cups that looked like fire hydrants.

The chief introduced the firefighters who were present.

As he presented each honor of distinction, Chief Russell said each person earned the award.



AWARDS FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

(above) Town Councilman Jason Hunt (left) and Chief Dennis Russell congratulate Firefighter of the Year John Stephenson.

BFR Lt. John Stephenson earned the 2016 Firefighter of the Year Award.

When no one was available to cover, Lt. Stephenson would step up

to perform the duty, Russell said.

“His dedication to the department and to his fellow firefighters in our department,” Russell said, “has gone above and beyond what he should have to do.”

YEARS OF SERVICE AWARD

(above) Jason Hunt and Dennis Russell thank Jesse Baggett Sr. for his 28 years of service to the residents and visitors of Bronson as a member of the Bronson Fire Department.

While Chief Russell has been involved with the fire service for 38 years, BFR Safety Officer

Jesse Baggett Sr. has been with the Bronson Fire Department for 28 years – after starting there in 1998.

He accepted the Years Of Service Award, presented for his 25-plus years of service to the Bronson Fire Department.

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SUSIE ROBINSON

(above) Deputy Town Clerk Susie Robinson accepts the trophy she earned for her work to help Bronson Fire Rescue.

The chief in making the presentation to Bronson Deputy Clerk Susie Robinson said she is not “in our department, but she is for our department.”

The plaque is marked with her name at the top.

Deputy Clerk Robinson does more for the department on the spur of the moment than anyone, Russell said, including himself.



PAMELA WHITEHEAD

(above) Town Clerk Pamela Whitehead was recognized for her work in helping the fire chief keep his presentations in order to present to the Town Council. The plaque she was presented with had her name at the top and noted it was in appreciation for what she does for the fire department and for the people of the Bronson area.

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Patrick and Pamela Whitehead.

CHIEF DENNIS RUSSELL

Town Clerk Pamela Whitehead presents Chief Dennis Russell for his hard work and dedication. Joining in this picture are Town Councilman Jason Hunt, who is the liaison for the fire department with the Town Council, and P.J. Whitehead, the son of



CAPT. GAIL FOOTE

(above) The chief recognized BFR Capt. Gail Foote for his dedication to helping the department by providing the training firefighters need.

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THE STEPPIN' ON UP AWARD

(above)
Firefighter
Jacob Arnold
accepts the
Steppin' On Up
Award for
always
providing the
service for the
Fire Department
when it is
needed.



BEST FOOT FORWARD



Two firefighters earned the 2016 BFR Best Foot Forward Award for doing their best to improve their skills. Christopher Kasper (seen here, above) and Thomas Goedeck (not pictured) are those firefighters. The cheif said they did as much in two months to improve their firefighting skills as some individuals do in two years.