



2013 Missouri State Employees of the Month

January 2013 State Employee of the Month

Daniela Heppard – Department of Natural Resources



Above [center left] Governor Nixon awards Daniela Heppard as the January State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family and co-workers.

Daniela Heppard is employed with the Dept. of Natural Resources' as an Administrative Office Support Assistant. Daniela's talents were proven in the summer of 2012 shortly following Governor Nixon's emergency declaration for the Missouri drought and the establishment of a state-wide emergency drought assistance program to financially support agricultural producers in procuring alternate or additional water supplies to minimize impacts from the drought on livestock and crops. Due to the urgency, and scope of the assistance program, the decision was made to establish a Call Center within the DNR, to initiate and continue regular contact with owners of approved projects to maintain awareness of the status and progress of approved projects.

DNR management needed identify key staff that could establish and operate a Call Center to ensure its success and the decision was immediately made to approach Daniela Heppard. Daniela helped ensure issues were addressed as they arose and established a Call Center data base to ensure accuracy and efficiency and put in place controls to help ensure project owner lists were accurate and updated. Daniela created and updated call center information sheets for callers to use and complete to ensure vital information was collected and she helped devise and implement a "phased system" to manage and track subsequent contacts with each project owner that provided regular, initially daily, updates to agency management and the Governor's office. Daniela was absolutely critical to the Call Center's success; she regularly worked 15-16 hour days at the Call Center, which was initially operated seven days a week. Her demeanor and approach to the ever-changing dynamics and demands of the Call Center provided the leadership and direction necessary to the Call Center's success.

Daniela's approach to this challenge was simply 'business as usual' and simply approaches issues of this magnitude with a spirit of "how can I help make this a success?" Whether engaged in exercises or emergency planning, deployment to the State Emergency Operations Center on behalf of the department, or even deployment out of state during disasters to coordinate the State of Missouri's involvement, Daniela continues to consistently deliver the highest level of public service and commitment both to this state and its citizens.

February 2013 State Employee of the Month

William "Bill" Stokes, Jr. – Department of Social Services



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards William "Bill" Stokes, Jr. as the February State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family and co-workers.

Bill Stokes began employment with the Department of Social Services, Southeast Region Welfare Investigation Unit (WIU) in March 1999 as an Investigator II. In June 2006, Bill was promoted to Special Agent in Charge of the Southeast WIU region and by early April 2012, Bill became the only investigator in the Southeast region and took on all investigation responsibilities for his region and all its 20 counties.

Other regions have up to six investigators and fewer counties. Bill accepted these responsibilities without hesitation and took it upon himself to organize and maintain the workload in anticipation of additional staff. From April to October 2012, Bill's workload increased exponentially;

however, he did not complain, but remained organized, focused, and continued to pursue prosecution cases and individuals for public assistance fraud. It is hard to put into words, the amount of initiative and extra effort that went into this service. Bill works a 4-10 schedule, operating independently and without failure.

Bill takes initiative on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, by driving hundreds of miles across 20 counties to locate individuals. Bill works hard to find people and because of his well-known status in his community, he is able to do so without failure. Bill does all this in the midst of caring for his family who require an equal amount of devotion on a different level.

March 2013 State Employee of the Month

Teresa Skaggs – Department of Health and Senior Services

Below [center] Governor Nixon awards Teresa Skaggs as the March State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family and co-workers.



Teresa Skaggs works within the Department of Health and Senior Services' Bureau of Community Food and Nutrition Assistance (CFNA), which administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Teresa's main duties revolve around the CACFP and SFSP.

This year, however, the bureau had lots of changes. Since March CFNA has had one person retire, two people promoted outside the bureau, one person promoted within

the bureau and one person quit in order to pursue a job outside of state government. Three of these people were critical to the SFSP. Teresa stepped up and filled all the necessary gaps to make sure the SFSP went on according to schedule. She made hundreds of phone calls to help returning and new sponsors complete the necessary paperwork and online information that was required. In addition to the telephone calls she also resolved numerous issues with contracts, debt collection, and any extraordinary issue that came up – all while also doing her own work.

When customers would call in and inquire about their contract with SFSP, Teresa would take the initiative and help them anyway she could. Teresa would coordinate efforts with the Division of Administration and discuss the issue with the contractor. Frequently, multiple calls to the contractor were necessary to gather information, update the contractor with new information, request additional information, or inform the contractor that we have received everything necessary to participate in the SFSP.

Even with the added work, Teresa maintained a positive attitude and cheerful disposition; she is always willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done right. Customers have nothing but great respect for Teresa and enjoy working with her; Teresa Skaggs consistently demonstrates what it takes to be not just a good employee, but a great employee.

April 2013 State Employee of the Month

Virginia Hardman – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards Virginia Hardman as the April State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family and co-workers.

Virginia Hardman is the Building Administrator for the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bootheel School and has brought a very positive change to the school.

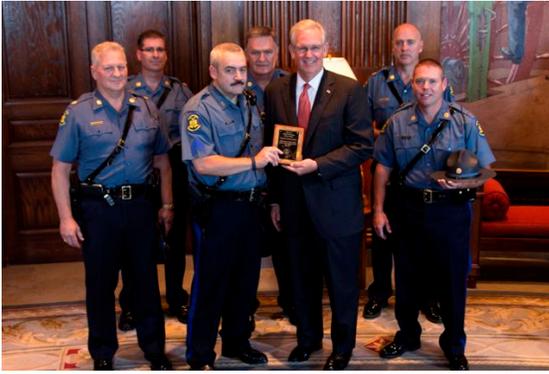
Prior to Virginia's arrival beginning with the 2012/2013 school year, there was little leadership and direction, and very little motivation to improve things at the school. The challenges to make the Bootheel School great were very difficult. However this did not deter Ms. Hardman, she found ways to motivate staff and bring about needed change and did this in a way that caused people to want to strive to do their best – every day – in every way. Virginia leads by example and sets a positive role model for others to emulate; she does not just give direction, she works with them as changes are achieved.

Virginia has a wealth of knowledge that she has shared with Bootheel staff and is actively involved in meeting the needs of students. She visits each classroom every day and has a hands on approach with students and staff in all aspects of student instruction. Virginia has used her past education experience and knowledge as a teacher to create the kind of learning environment needed to meet and excel the School's standards and is knowledgeable of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers, consistently monitoring their instruction and giving timely input for improvement. Every Friday afternoon, all students and staff meet in the commons area of the School for "Minute to Win It" activities with staff members competing as part of a team; then activities are adapted for student participation, which has created a highly successful instructional tool for the student body. In addition, Virginia has implemented a school-wide art and music program.

Virginia's dedicated and motivational attitude have been a valuable tool for staff and students. She always listens to students' and staffs' opinions with all issues and helps them to come up with a way to solve any obstacle they encounter in a way that is in the best interest of everyone. Virginia Hardman is a valuable resource to the Bootheel School, the Department, and serves as a positive model for all to emulate.

May 2013 State Employees of the Month

Sergeant Nicholas Berry and Corporal Kyle Easley – Department of Public Safety-Missouri State Highway Patrol



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards Sergeant Nicholas Berry as one of the May State Employees of the Month. Also pictured are co-workers. Below [right of center] Governor Nixon presents the May State Employee of the Month award to Corporal Kyle Easley. Also pictured are family and co-workers.



On February 1, 2013, Sergeant Nicholas Berry and Corporal Kyle Easley became aware of a fire at the Cairo Senior Apartments located in Cairo, Missouri. They arrived at the site and observed flames coming from the roof and southwest portion of the building. The burning structure was a single-level building containing separate apartments designed for senior citizens. The fire was rapidly spreading and immediate evacuation of the occupants was crucial for their survival.

Corporal Easley located an 87 year old woman in the northwest part of the building standing in the doorway of her apartment who appeared scared and confused. Corporal Easley observed the soffit near the top of her doorway beginning to burn and the resident told Corporal Easley she wanted to back into her apartment to get some items, but he did not allow access and quickly escorted the resident to the parking lot out of harms way.

Simultaneously, Sergeant Berry was attempting to make contact with an occupant in an apartment on the northeast side of the building. He knocked on the door with announcing the presence of the fire; receiving no response he checked to find the door locked. Sergeant Berry kicked the door open and entered the apartment to find it filled with smoke. Observing no one in the front room he went to the bedroom where he located a 74 year old man still in bed. Sergeant Berry wrapped him in a blanket, located the resident's house slippers, and escorted him out of the apartment to safety. Corporal Easley, after ensuring the safety of the first resident, responded to the southeast apartment where he found the door unlocked and made entry. Once inside he observed this apartment was also filled with smoke and the west wall was beginning to burn through. Corporal Easley located a 70 year old man sitting in a wheelchair and escorted him and his dog to the parking lot.

After all residents were safe the Corporal and Sergeant helped firefighters move vehicles from the parking lot to avoid damage. Each person were evaluated by ambulance personnel and released to family members. The outside temperature during this fire was approximately two degrees Fahrenheit – a very cold night. This situation created a considerable danger to the personal safety of Sergeant Berry and Corporal Easley. Their quick and decisive actions went above and beyond the call of duty and were directly responsible for saving the lives of the occupants in the building. These two officers serve the state of Missouri and citizens with the utmost professionalism and are in keeping with the highest tradition of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

June 2013 State Employee of the Month

Natalie McDonald – Department of Public Safety – St. James Veterans' Home



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards Natalie McDonald as the June State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are friends and co-workers.

As a Lead Certified Nursing Assistant – with the Department of Public Safety's St. James Veterans' Home – Ms. Natalie McDonald exemplifies and models the best of outstanding care giving in every way. Natalie is a natural in her relationships with the residents of St. James Veterans' Home, and uses her instincts and talent to relate with the residents in every way. She is willing to go the extra mile helping residents adapt to their new living environment and her love of the residents shows in each interaction.

Recently she approached her resident's social security worker and unit manager about an unusual request for a behavioral intervention with a younger resident who is unhappy with his health status and can become verbally demanding and abusive to those trying to assist him. Natalie had an idea, tested it with the resident's permission to see if it might work; it did. Along with the other interventions the health care team tired, the approach has allowed this Veteran to adjust better in his environment at the Home.

Natalie has distinguished herself as a team leader and has mentored staff leading by example and works with unit managers to build team spirit. Natalie's participation in and vision gained from the National Association of Health Care Assistants [NAHCA] conventions and the My Caregiver Magazine helped her to start the first successful NAHCA leadership team in the Home, which is thriving today.

Ms. Natalie McDonald definitely promotes on a consistent basis the TEAM approach – Together Everyone Achieves More – in both resident care and team spirit in an atmosphere of joy and fun.

July 2013 State Employee of the Month

Shane Hirschman – Department of Corrections – Probation and Parole, District 30



Above [center] Shane Hirschman is recognized by Governor Nixon as the July State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family, friends and co-workers.

In his position as Probation and Parole Office II, Shane Hirschman has gone above and beyond his normal working duties. Mr. Hirschman noticed there had been an increased number of violent incidents that led to arrests and, often in these cases, the offenders had all used legally purchased synthetic drugs prior to the altercation.

Mr. Hirschman made the decision and took charge of creating community and staff awareness of this problem, and created the Synthetic Drug Task Force in the Vernon County area. The task force includes the juvenile office, police and sheriff's departments, DARE officers, court administrator, Missouri State Highway Patrol, substance abuse treatment providers, and the superintendent of the local schools. Due to this task force and the need for changes, the Nevada Police Department agreed to contact local retailers asking them to remove all synthetic drugs from their shelves, and after discussing the dangers of the synthetic drugs store owners agreed to remove the items from the stores. To increase their own knowledge of this problem, task force members and those directly involved with the criminal justice system were scheduled for additional training. Mr.

Hirschman was instrumental in bringing the training to his area; he created promotional flyers, secured a training location, and obtained the presenters credentials so that fellow officers could obtain credit. On June 14, 2012 an officer from the Saint Joseph Police Department presented the first of several presentations regarding synthetic drugs which included identification, dangers, use, and effects of the different synthetic drugs present in communities across the nation. Upon completion of this training of criminal justice professionals, the task force plans to extend the education of synthetic drugs to the entire community. Plans are in progress to educate faculty, parents, and students in Vernon County.

Mr. Hirschman is without doubt a dedicated professional; letters were received from the Nevada School Superintendent, the 28th Judicial Circuit Court Administrator, and the Nevada Chief of Police, all praising Mr. Hirschman for a job well done for the creation of the task force and many other outstanding he does for his community. The Police Chief said "These successes are a testament to PO Hirschman's commitment to public safety and highest ideals of service to the community. His actions have significantly raised the bar for Law Enforcement and are commendable. He brings credit to himself and to the highest traditions of the Probation and Parole Office." Mr. Shane Hirschman took the initiative and has made a significant impact for the citizens in his community and is a credit to the Department and all Missourians.

August 2013 State Employee of the Month

William "Rusty" James – Department of Transportation – Lee's Summit



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards William "Rusty" James as the August State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family, friends and co-workers.

William "Rusty" James works for the Dept. of Transportation's Kansas City Scout's bi-state Traffic Management System as an Incident Management Coordinator and is committed to safety in the field of Traffic Incident Management [TIM]. Mr James knows traffic crashes, both on-scene and in response, are the leading cause of death among on-duty law enforcement officers and a major cause among fire-rescue personnel. Rusty began a public relations style campaign, meeting with area law enforcement associations, police, and fire departments to enlist their assistance in implementing an effective Incident Management [IM] program for the Kansas City area. He established a forum that provides an avenue for all responders to effectively and clearly communicate with each other by hosting TIM Symposiums. As a result of Rusty's efforts, the Kansas and Missouri Dept. of Transportation have worked together with first responders for several years as a part of Scout's IM Program.

Rusty was instrumental in the procurement of thousands of dollars worth of surveying and mapping equipment and provided those to law enforcement agencies to be used for crash scenes to include faster clearance of incidents; this has reduced congestion and makes roadways safer. Rusty is dedicated to saving lives through the use of proper training, equipment, standards and procedures and travels regionally and nationally to train a multitude of agencies on the proper use of equipment and has become a highly sought TIM speaker; he displays outstanding leadership and vision in emergency traffic incident management by employing progressive management techniques.

Through Rusty's leadership, Kansas City Scout's IM Program and its partners work cooperatively using the Scout system's network of cameras, and message boards to effectively reduce the amount of time vehicles involved in accidents sit on area freeways, greatly reducing the number of secondary crashes which are statistically worse than the original incident.

Mr. Rusty James inspires excellence and is dedicated to the IM program's success. He is the first Incident Manager in the country to coordinate incident management across state lines and coordinates multiple entities for both states, each with different objectives, procedures, and protocols. He demonstrates that clearing incidents safely and quickly within an effective incident management system is not based solely on proven technologies, but also requires cooperation and communication among diverse organizations, which he has led the charge in achieving.

September 2013 State Employee of the Month

Lisa Rodenbaugh – Department of Public Safety – Mexico Veterans' Home



Above [center] Governor Nixon awards Lisa Rodenbaugh as the September State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family, friends and co-workers.

As a Senior Office Support Assistant/Nursing Scheduler, for the Dept. of Public Safety's Mexico's Veterans Home, Lisa Rodenbaugh exceeds expectations by working with a great deal of autonomy requiring very little oversight in regard to her work. She exhibits outstanding initiative as seen by the way she revolutionized the Nursing Schedule Position which resulted in a better schedule plan, maximized staff ratios while reducing liability - as evidenced by a reduction in overtime dollars paid to the entire Nursing Department over a 4 week period, and assisting other departments as necessary including, but not limited to, Medical Records and Activities.

Although her own job duties are demanding, Lisa took time to train someone for a job she herself once held, and do so on her own accord to what she does best – “make a difference” that positively and directly impacts the Home's success. Ms. Rodenbaugh also assisted with a recent media issue among residents and did an outstanding job of troubleshooting the staffing rosters during this past winter's snow storms, often staying late or coming in early to assure coverage was provided.

Lisa served as the project manager for a recent Employee Retention Program which had a positive impact as evidenced by a turnover rate among Nursing Assistants of 16% over a 6 month period compared to a 34% rate during the same timeframe a year ago. Additionally the turnover rate of Nursing assistants in 2013 is 6% while the turnover rate of Licensed Nurses is 0%.

Lisa Rodenbaugh is a valuable resource for the Mexico Veterans Home, its staff, residents, and citizens of Missouri.

October 2013 State Employee of the Month

Tracy Henson – Department of Health and Senior Services – Bureau of Cancer and Chronic Disease Control



Above [center] Tracy Henson is recognized by Governor Nixon as the October State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family, friends and co-workers.

As a Senior Office Support Assistant assigned to the Dept. of Health and Senior Services' Bureau of Cancer and Chronic Disease Control in the WISEWOMAN program, Tracy went above her normal job duties and volunteered to assist the Bureau of Community Health and Wellness [CHW]. CHW needed someone to answer the phones and respond to the most urgent needs at a time when all three of their clerical positions were vacant.

Ms. Henson brought her very valuable skills and an approach toward internal customer service that should serve as a model for all clerical staff – from entry level to the most senior. While still providing support to the WISEWOMAN program, Tracy exceeded the duties assigned to her in CHW and brought a new professionalism to the office. She learned new computer skills to assist with grant/contract budget preparation; responded to requests in a detailed and efficient manner; laid the groundwork for incoming clerical staff; and met each task with a pleasant attitude.

One of the first things people see when they visit the Bureau is the clerical space. The empty clerical area had acquired piles of files and documents. Ms. Henson took it upon herself to completely reorganize this area and worked with program managers to determine which files/documents needed to be filed or destroyed. An example of Ms. Henson's willingness to “go the extra mile” was seen when one program manager needed assistance with preparation of a sample budget for potential new contractors. Tracy taught herself the basics of Excel and set up the spreadsheet; this will now make it easy for future contractors to “copy and past” the model budget into their proposals. Tracy assured the essential work of the Bureau flowed smoothly, letters were written effectively, and documents were tracked efficiently to provide status updates to managers. Every minute of every day found Tracy exhibiting a welcoming smile, and a “What can I do for you?” attitude. Once CHW staff member stated “...she was always very helpful when asked to do anything, had a pleasant and positive attitude and was a real joy to be around. She fit in well with everyone in the Bureau and helped us out at a time when we were very, very short-handed.”

An expectation of the Department is that everyone helps out when needed, but Tracy took that to a new level. If asked she would most likely say it was no big deal, but to CHW it was a big deal and Tracy is without a doubt an extraordinary employee and an asset to State Government.

November 2013 State Employee of the Month

Irene Crawford – Department of Natural Resources – Northeast Regional Office

[picture not available]

As a regional director for the Department of Natural Resources' Northeast Regional Office [NERO], Irene Crawford is highly effective as a motivator and has instilled pride and the desire to provide quality work in the NERO staff. Recently, Irene was a key leader in the development of the Division of Environmental Quality [DEQ] Online Training Portal, which went online in March of 2013 only twelve months after the project began.

The Compliance Training project developed over 175 modules of training topics to assist new and existing staff by providing the information needed to perform their job duties. These modules establish the base level of performance and knowledge that all DEQ employees are expected to understand and utilize. The modules are posted on the DEQ Training Portal of the Department's intranet and are both training tools and references for staff on a wide variety of subjects. These modules contain common-sense guidance to assist staff in difficult situations. Development of the training modules involved capturing information in short and concise format from the most experienced and knowledgeable staff in DEQ for use by all staff. Individual pages of information can also be printed for quick reference. The training is linked to the department's training records to ensure that credit for completion of the training is recorded. Irene has long been a supporter of staff training, and as chair for this project she had a vision of providing staff with completed, convenient, and effective training. She took the concept of DNR 101 that she developed at NERO in 2002 and convinced the workgroup of the benefits of this approach. The workgroup's initial assignment was to plan two days of training classes but the scope and type of training increased as the project evolved. Irene worked with workgroup members and persuaded numerous long-tenured employees to take the time to assist in developing training information based on their acquired knowledge and experience; Irene voluntarily devoted many hours, both work and personal, in writing and editing the information. The project timeline was aggressive and resulted in the completion of this huge project in just one year.

The Compliance Training Project was completed with no additional budget costs and all workgroup members continued to perform their regular job duties. The organization and management of this complex project took exceptional skills and coordination. This online training is instantly available to staff, can be reviewed repeatedly, has no travel or instructional costs, and the improvements to staff knowledge and work performance are just beginning to emerge and are expected to increase.

Ms. Crawford has repeatedly said that it took the efforts and support of many staff to accomplish this project and that everyone involved deserves credit, but it was Irene's leadership, efforts, and enthusiasm that produced high quality and comprehensive results in a short time.

December 2013 State Employee of the Month

Dixie Lee Hall – Department of Health and Senior Services – Division of Senior and Disability Services



Above [center] Dixie Lee Hall is Governor Nixon recognizes Dixie Lee Hall as the December State Employee of the Month. Also pictured are family, friends and co-

Dixie Lee Hall is an Adult Protective and Community Worker II with the Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Senior and Disability Services, Section for Adult Protective and Community Services, Bureau of Home and Community Services, in Region 3.

While all of our Adult Protective Community Workers deserve special recognition for the services they provide to adults at risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, Dixie stands out, because in many situations, she has overcome obstacles with a remarkable perseverance to accomplish extremely difficult tasks.

Dixie approaches very problematic tasks and situations with a great amount of courage and she engages and convinces reported adults as well as other agencies, such as law enforcement and medical providers to take the necessary steps for a safe solution. Dixie does excellent work in

obtaining evidence, thoroughly documenting all actions and completing her case load in a timely manner. She has a passion for helping vulnerable adults to live a life in safety and with respect for their rights.

Dixie Lee Hall approaches very problematic tasks and situations with a great amount of courage and she engages and convinces reported adults as well as other agencies, such as law enforcement and medical providers to take the necessary steps for a safe solution. Dixie also does excellent work in obtaining evidence, thoroughly documenting all actions and completing her case load in a timely manner. She has a passion for helping vulnerable adults to live a life in safety and with respect for their rights and serves as an excellent role model for all to emulate.