

SUPERVISORS PRESENT "HERO" COINS TO SIX

Honors for three injured Placer County firefighters

By Gus Thomson, Journal Staff Writer



Gus Thomson/Auburn Journal

Three firefighters seriously injured while fighting a wildfire in the rural Lincoln area receive commendations Tuesday from the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Seen with Lincoln-area Supervisor Robert Weygandt, second from left, are, from left, Spencer Mallinger, Chris John and John Martell Jr.

Three firefighters seriously injured after being trapped in flames during a wildfire in the rural Lincoln area last June stepped up Tuesday to receive commendations – and a standing ovation – at a Placer County Board of Supervisors meeting.

The three – Chris John, Spencer Mallinger and John Martell Jr. – were awarded commendations for their heroism fighting the fire by Supervisor Robert Weygandt, whose district takes in the Lincoln area.

John, a Cal Fire firefighter, suffered first- and second-degree burns to his hands, face and a knee. He was treated at the UC Davis Burn Center for more than a week.

Mallinger, a Cal Fire engineer, suffered first-, second- and third-degree burns to his hands and face and was also treated at the Burn Center for more than a week. He required skin grafts and continues to be treated as an outpatient to regain full use of his hands.

Martell, a volunteer driver-operator with the Placer County Fire Department, sustained first and minor second-degree burns to his face and was also treated at the Burn Center. He was recently honored as Placer County Fire Department Firefighter of the Year.

"It's definitely been a rough time for all of us," Mallinger said. "We appreciate the recognition."

All three were singled out for their "commitment to duty and personal self-sacrifice and, especially, for their bravery while fighting the June 11 Lincoln fire."

Supervisors also presented commemorative "hero" coin awards to residents they selected from their districts. The annual awards recognize outstanding citizens who have long records of community service, have performed acts of heroism or participated in little-known but commendable feats.

Honorees were:

- Supervisor Rocky Rockholm's District 1 – Melba Erven, a former Miss Placer County who has devoted more than 50 years to community service in Roseville.
- Weygandt's District 2 – Rural Lincoln resident Warren Bostick, who organized the volunteer Paige Fire Company, and Capt. Ed Zimmerman, a rural Lincoln resident who has served in the volunteer fire department for more than 20 years.
- Supervisor Jim Holmes' District 3 – Randy Elder, who was described as the driving force behind the successful Loomis Fire Protection District assessment.

- Supervisor Kirk Uhler's District 4 – Ray Johnston, leader of Bayside Churches, whose church provides assistance to people in need in Placer County and internationally.
- Supervisor Bruce Kranz's District 5 – Jack Briner, a Tahoe resident and former county supervisor active in state, local and regional issues.

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