



NEWS RELEASE

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AFSCME and OCSEA honor ODOT employees for “Exceptional Commitment to Public Safety”

Harsh winter was met with heroic action from plow drivers across the state

COLUMBUS – With near record snowfalls across many parts of Ohio and long-term subzero temperatures brought on by the Polar Vortex, this has been a winter for the ages. Extreme conditions had experts advising most Ohioans to stay inside to stay safe and warm. But Ohio Department of Transportation employees were out fighting the elements and keeping Ohioans safe.

Though snowplow drivers serve the public every day by keeping the roads clear, this past season’s extreme conditions offered ample opportunities for these drivers to show their commitment to safety over and above their everyday service. The drivers responded, and now OCSEA and AFSCME and ODOT are honoring their exceptional service.

“Every day ODOT drivers put the public ahead of themselves. When the rest of us are hunkered down waiting for the storm to pass, they’re out there making sure the public is safe and secure. These four drivers represent the best in public service,” said Chris Mabe, President of OCSEA. “Steve Kinstle and Javier Gallegos showed quick thinking and judgment when they made sure two children were safe and warm while firefighters responded to a house fire. Larry Poage and Ed Kane reacted swiftly when they spotted a motorist trapped in floodwaters. As Kane drove, Poage crawled onto their plow and pulled the motorist out of the car and up to safety. Their actions exemplify what it means to be a public servant.”

"Public employees like Steve Kinstle, Javier Gallegos, Larry Poage and Ed Kane believe in doing what we can for each other and our neighbors," said Laura Reyes, AFSCME's secretary-treasurer. "The extraordinary actions of these AFSCME members we're honoring today exemplify the very best our country and our union has to offer."

The employees were honored in a ceremony at OCSEA’s headquarters in Worthington. ODOT Director Jerry Wray was on hand and delivered remarks praising the employees.

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OCSEA represents approximately 30,000 public employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).