



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

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WKVC Staff Wins Governor's Ambassador Award for Teamwork

*Recognized above 14 other nominated teams
for dedicated work during 2009 Ice Storm*

Pictures of award and ice storm at <http://veterans.ky.gov/photos/WKVCaward.htm>

(FRANKFORT, KY, Oct. 14, 2009) First Lady Jane Beshear presented employees of KDVA's own Western Kentucky Veterans Center in Hanson with the First Governor's Ambassador Award for Teamwork in a formal ceremony Tuesday.

"We couldn't be more proud of them, but we're not surprised," said KDVA Commissioner Ken Lucas. "That kind of dedication, determination and devotion to caring for our veterans is what our staff do every day in our nursing homes, our cemeteries and our field offices throughout the state."

The awards program was established in October 2008 to highlight stories of employees who have positively affected the lives of their co-workers, customers and community.

"State employees are official ambassadors of our Commonwealth," said Gov. Beshear. "The stories of these individuals encourage and inspire. They are extraordinary examples of what it means to be a Kentuckian and what it means to be a public servant."

Nominations were accepted throughout the year in six categories: customer service, courage, leadership, professional achievement, teamwork or community service and volunteerism. Ninety-eight nominations were submitted, involving more than 300 employees.

WKVC staff were one of 15 teams nominated for the award, which cited Lori Hardwick-Hill, Guinn Cost, Sam Beeny, LaDonna Scott, Angela Wolfe, Mary Lynn Troop, Ruth Pettus, Kathy Son, Morraine Cox, Gina Marks, Lisa Foster, Candice Watts, Mark Bandy, Tim Brister and Lisa Revlett for this:

“During the ice storm of 2009, these employees exceeded all set standards to ensure the health, safety and emotional well-being of the residents of the Western Kentucky Veterans Center. Employees from all areas of the facility, and from organizational units located elsewhere, helped to provide critical nursing, food, laundry and housekeeping services. Employees stayed at the facility – sleeping, bathing, eating, and working hard to ensure that residents were secure, warm, and well taken care of.”

Even as the power went down and stayed down throughout Hopkins County in January/February, service to the 120 veterans at Western Kentucky Veterans Center barely paused.

The moment power failed at 6:20 a.m. on January 27, the generators at WKVC kicked on. For more than nine days, maintenance staff stayed at the facility around the clock to keep the generators going until the power returned on February 5.

Staff in the nursing, dietary and housekeeping departments stayed past their own shifts to ensure full coverage when employees could not get to work because of blocked roads.

Gloria Willis, a Nurse Aide State Registered, is to be commended for not letting a few downed trees keep her away, determinedly walking to work to cover her shift.

Staff throughout the facility pitched in wherever they were needed, helping to prepare and serve meals, clean laundry and perform other tasks not part of their regular jobs. KDVA staff from the Frankfort headquarters and from Thomson-Hood Veterans Center in Wilmore also traveled west to help provide critical nursing, food, laundry and housekeeping services.

Many employees had lost power at their homes, so WKVC opened its doors to those families, enabling spouses and children to sleep, bathe and get meals at the facility during the emergency.

“The residents really didn’t see any changes in the delivery of care except maybe eating on paper plates,” WKVC Administrator Lori Hill said. “We pride ourselves on the fact that the

residents were very secure, warm and well taken care of and didn't have to experience the full effects of the ice storm."

The emergency gave residents an opportunity to reflect on their memories of the Blizzard of 1978 and other bad storms, and tell those stories while basking in the extra attention they received from employees' children and other family members staying there.

"Teamwork was what got everyone through this," Hill said.