

Mercer County honors Sheriff's Officer of the Year

Mercer County Sheriff Jack Kemler announced the Officer of the Year for 2014 along with special awards for distinguished performance in the line of duty at a ceremony on May 16 at the Mercer County Civil Courthouse. The Sheriff's Office traditionally honors its sworn officers, investigators and detectives who have excelled in making Mercer County viable and its courthouses safe.

This year's Sheriff's Officer of the Year is Officer Gregory Bezek. The Officer of the Year award is given to a well-rounded officer who has exceeded the duty requirements expected of his or her position and has demonstrated a distinct and positive pattern of service and professional achievement.

Bezek, a 13-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office, is assigned to the Sheriff's Process Unit, serving various court and legal documents throughout the county. He is also a noteworthy representative of the Sheriff's Office Programs Unit. There, Officer Bezek has presented hundreds of public programs throughout his career related to crime prevention and awareness, community education, and children's and senior safety such as child car seat inspections and National Prescription Drug Take-Back initiatives.

Sheriff Kemler also presented Line of Duty Awards to officers, inspectors and detectives who displayed notable performance, heroism or lifesaving.

"These awards speak volumes to each officer's professionalism, dedication and valor," said Sheriff Kemler. "Their commitment to serve is an inspiration to all citizens in Mercer County."

Sheriff's Gallantry Medals: Officer Christopher McKenna and Officer Joseph Tuccillo

For their brave actions when responding to a January 2014 shooting in progress in the City of Trenton, Officers Christopher McKenna and Joseph Tuccillo have been awarded the Sheriff's Gallantry Medals. With a victim on the ground suffering from a gunshot wound, they followed a blood trail to a nearby third floor apartment where they apprehended Eddie Rooks with blood on his hands and a loaded weapon. Consequently, they ended a violent situation and removed a dangerous criminal from the streets of Trenton.

Sheriff's Achievement Medals: Investigator Michael Paglione and Investigator Suania Negron

For entering a Centre Street home that was fully engulfed in fire to ensure all occupants were out safely and then swiftly evacuating surrounding homes in the neighborhood, Investigators Michael Paglione and Suania Negron were awarded Sheriff's Achievement Medals.

Letter of Recognition: Detectives Dean Wylie, William Perez, James Udijohn and James Nizolek

For their joint work with the U.S. Marshal's Regional Fugitive Task Force to locate and apprehend Lawrence Vernon in Trenton, wanted on first-degree murder charges for shooting a man in Fayetteville, North Carolina last year,



From left: Mercer County Sheriff Jack Kemler and Sheriff's Officer of the Year Gregory Bezek

these detectives were awarded letters of recognition. Under a combined law enforcement initiative, their actions led to the apprehension of an extremely dangerous criminal that journeyed into the community.

Years of Service awards were also presented to officers with 10 and 25 years of departmental service. Sheriff Jack Kemler thanked each individual officer for his or her dedication to the people of Mercer County. ♥

Linden promotes six officers

Six veteran Linden police superior officers were recently promoted during a ceremony at Linden City Hall on July 1 before an audience filled with family, friends, colleagues and city officials.

It was also a milestone event for the police department as Jonathan Parham's promotion signified a first for an African-American officer reaching the rank of captain; Nancy Petroski was the first female officer to attain the rank of lieutenant.

Both Mayor Richard J. Gerbounka and Chief James Schulhafer congratulated the officers and wished them continued success in their careers.



From left: Chief James M. Schulhafer, Lieutenant Michael E. Babulski, Lieutenant Abdul Williams, Lieutenant Nancy E. Petroski, Lieutenant Joseph A. Cacioppo, Captain Jonathan R. Parham, Captain William F. Turbett, Jr.