



**OLD DOMINION EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ALLIANCE INC.**

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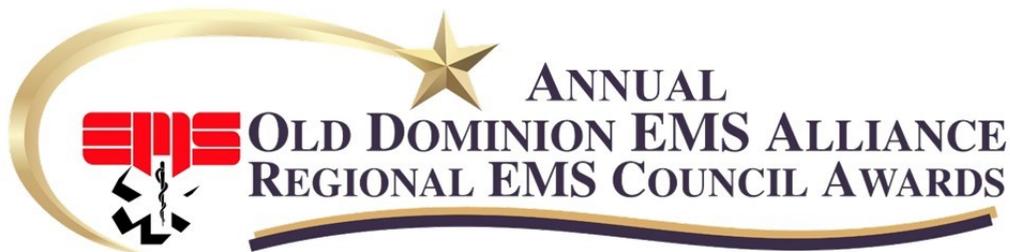
## PRESS RELEASE

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**For More Information, Contact:**

Ryan Scarbrough  
Office #: (804) 560-3300  
Cell #: (804) 938-6394  
Email: [rscarbrough@vaems.org](mailto:rscarbrough@vaems.org)



### **Regional EMS Council Announces 2019 Regional EMS Award Winners**

(Richmond, VA) - The 2019 Old Dominion EMS Alliance (ODEMSA) Regional EMS Council Award winners were announced at the 2019 ODEMSA Regional EMS Council Awards Ceremony at Kings Dominion in Doswell, VA. Executive Director Heidi Hooker recognized 12 outstanding EMS providers and organizations from across Virginia Planning Districts 13, 14, 15, and 19, for their exceptional achievements and dedication to the regional EMS system.

The awards were presented in conjunction with the start of the 45th National Emergency Medical Services Week. EMS Week celebrates EMS practitioners and the vital work they do in our nation's communities. This EMS Week kick-off welcomed EMS providers and their families, in addition to EMS allies from across the ODEMSA Region and the Commonwealth.

"It is so exciting that we are kicking off EMS week for our region," said Ryan Scarbrough, Regional Projects Coordinator, Old Dominion EMS Alliance. "We have world-class providers within our four planning districts and what a better way to distinguish them than to have them come out to a world-class amusement park and recognize them in front of their peers and family members."

"We have so many providers and agencies from our region that have helped to shape the face of EMS into what it is today," said Heidi Hooker, Executive Director, Old Dominion EMS Alliance. "We have providers and agencies that continue to exceed the mark of excellence, and we are here to recognize them for all that they do every single day. Congratulations to all of this year's regional level award winners and good luck to them as their regional awards move them into the running for this year's Governor's EMS Awards that will be held in November, at the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services' 40th Annual Symposium in Norfolk, VA."



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## Award for Excellence in EMS

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Excellence in EMS was presented to James H. Gould, with VCU Center for Trauma & Critical Care Education. Jay has had a long and distinguished career in EMS as a provider, administrator, and educator. He began his career in 1974 at Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad, where he served in nearly all capacities of leadership, and where he is now a life member. His career in EMS has led him down many paths, including the opportunity in 1994, to develop an EMS course in Russia. He also received the Governor's Letter of Recognition in 1989.

A patriarch in EMS, he is a pioneer that forged the future for all providers in Virginia, especially with his service at the Medical College of Virginia. His longevity and vast experience allow him to serve as a subject matter expert in EMS. Few can boast the expertise he can and yet he remains humble and eager to pass lessons and knowledge from his experiences to future generations



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## Award for Outstanding EMS Administrator

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Administrator was presented to Greg Jones with Chesterfield Fire and EMS/MedFlight One. Greg is a tenured company officer and a paramedic with Chesterfield County Fire and EMS. He has served in multiple capacities within many organizations but, it is his service and leadership as the Chief Flight Paramedic of MedFlight 1 since 2011, that justifies his receipt of this award.

In 2015 Greg's ability to manage and problem solve was instrumental to the successful transition of the MedFlight 1 program from two paramedics to a paramedic/nurse configuration. His knowledge, skill, and abilities exemplify the meaning of EMS leadership and have earned him the title of a fair and trusted administrator who gets the job done.



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## Award for Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS was presented to Gail Weatherford, FNP of Forest View Volunteer Rescue Squad. Gail has been an honored and faithful member of Forest View Volunteer Rescue Squad for over 36 years, where she remains an active riding member. As an EMS provider, she has risen through the ranks, holding positions of EMT, Paramedic, Crew Lieutenant, Junior Squad Advisor, Secretary, Vice-President and Training Officer, the last of which she has held for 25 years.

She is also a respected member of the VCU Health System. While there she has worked in pediatrics, the emergency room, trauma care, and is currently a Nurse Practitioner in primary care. Gail had married these two professions to create within her the perfect balance. Her dedication to medicine is distinct and exemplified by her continued education as both a nurse practitioner and an EMS provider. She shares her knowledge and experiences through training and preception programs, developed by her. Her peers will tell you it's her empathy and compassion for her patients, fellow squad members, co-workers, and the people she is training that makes her stand out. She conveys her desire for everyone to succeed and pushes others to achieve boundaries they believed impossible. They say that when you work with her, you learn from her.



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## **Award for Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS**

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS was presented to Stephanie K. Louka, MD of VCU Health. Stephanie's career in medicine has its roots in EMS, and she is a Life Member of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad. While there she earned a variety of awards and accolades as an EMS Provider. She carried her passion for EMS with her throughout medical school and into her career as a practicing physician that has culminated with her completion of sub-specialty fellowship in Emergency Medical Services at VCU Health.

As a fellow, she has taken on the responsibilities as an EMS educator and advocate, presenting over a dozen original continuing education courses in the last three years. She also serves as the medical director for the nation's first university-level point of care ultrasonography course explicitly created for prehospital providers. She serves as Assistant Medical Director for the Richmond Ambulance Authority, where she has embraced the idea of mobile integrated healthcare. She also serves as Flight Physician with VCU LifeEvac, where she uses her skills to train and mentor our air medical prehospital providers.

As if her work in Virginia wasn't enough, she has even taken her passion and expertise in EMS outside our country's borders to Rwanda, where she has helped develop their EMS infrastructure. We also believe she might be the only OMD in the ODEMSA Region, trained by NASA, in space shuttle emergency landing & astronaut extrication.



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## Award for Outstanding Prehospital Educator

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Prehospital Educator was presented to Rodney C. Newton of Victoria Fire & Rescue. Rodney teaches because he loves it, and he motivates students to excellence by displaying it.

As an educator, he connects with his students, and he provides individualized learning opportunities. He makes learning pleasant and productive and brings positive attributes to the classroom. As a life member of Victoria Fire and Rescue, he has walked the path and has lived the pages of the textbook from which he teaches. Students say he is a wealth of knowledge and that constant words of encouragement have led many, who otherwise would've quit, to continue with courses that might seem impossible to complete. He embraces the opportunity to fill new minds with knowledge, and they love him for it.



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### Award for Outstanding Prehospital Provider

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Prehospital Provider was presented to Jimmy Lee Pair of Greenville Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc. Though Jimmy has only been in EMS for 15 years, he has packed a lot of experiences into that time. His friends will tell you he wears his EMS hat “24/7”. Whether in his role as a Deputy with the Greenville County Sheriff’s Office or as an Advanced EMT with the Greenville Volunteer Rescue Squad, he is continuously monitoring radios and going where he is most needed.

Described as a jack of all trades, his experience working with a telecommunications company allows him the ability to troubleshoot and repair squad radios when needed, or offer educated advice on upgrades and funding. His experience as a dispatcher allowed him the knowledge to upgrade two dispatch systems and gave him the skill to clarify misconceptions of field providers with them. His job as a deputy allowed him the ability to have crews stage when a call that was dispatched initially as an “unconscious person” was a call for a shooting. Also, his experience as a medic allowed him to use an AED that he kept in his patrol car, to defibrillate and revive a cardiac arrest patient. Jimmy is dedicated to his community and making it safer no matter what role he plays.



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### Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety was presented to the Metro Richmond Flying Squad located in Richmond, VA. The health and safety within our fire and EMS occupation is sometimes overlooked, but not by the Metro Richmond Flying Squad (MRFS). MRFS was established in December 2016, when a group of firefighters from around the area identified a lack of rehabilitation services on scene. They pursued the utilization of a donated vehicle and secured the equipment needed to accomplish their mission. Five months later they were up and running with 30 volunteers consisting of active and retired firefighters. What started as a goal of providing rehab services to firefighters, quickly expanded to include EMS, police, and displaced residents.

In January 2019 they were called to assist on the scene of a house fire. Not only did they help the firefighters and provided warmth and shelter to the two displaced residents, who wore only shorts and flip flops on the snow-covered city streets they also provided a safe and warm place for the resident's two dogs.



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### Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children was presented to Samuel T. Bartle, MD of VCU Health. Sam is one of ODEMSA's most passionate pediatric advocates. He is a pediatric emergency medicine physician at the VCU Health System, which is the only certified Pediatric Trauma Center in Virginia. He has over 20 years of practice in the field of pediatric emergency medicine and his areas of clinical interest include Pediatric Injury & Trauma and Pediatric Sedation.

He is active in governmental and public advocacy of pediatric health, medical and safety issues. As busy as Sam may be, he still finds time to share his knowledge with the EMS community every chance he has. It is not uncommon to see him teaching continuing education classes at a local rescue squad, attending a sub-council meeting, or a committee meeting at the regional council level, or chairing a state committee. Pediatric medicine is his passion and educating and assisting the EMS provider is a close second.

Sam was recognized for his advocacy work on behalf of children at the Virginia General Assembly in 2009 by the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He currently serves as the chapter's chairperson for its governmental and legislative affairs committee, and as its representative on the governor's sub-panel on disaster preparedness. Sam also serves as a representative on the Governor's Emergency Medical Services Council Advisory Board for the Virginia College of Emergency Physicians. He is the current Chairperson for the EMS for Children Committee, a sub-committee of the Governor's EMS Advisory Board.

He practices pediatric emergency medicine at the VCU Health System and is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Emergency Medicine with a joint faculty appointment in the Department of Pediatrics for VCU Health System. He is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Emergency Physicians. Sam has spent a lifetime in service to children, with just as much time spent assuring that EMS providers have the tools to do the same.



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### Award for Outstanding EMS Agency

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Agency was presented to Lakeside Volunteer Rescue Squad from Henrico, VA. The Lakeside Volunteer Rescue Squad is one of the last remaining agencies in the ODEMSA Region and the Commonwealth that doesn't charge for services and doesn't employ any paid staff.

This January they celebrated 61 years of providing care to the citizens of Henrico County. Their all-volunteer force consists of over 50 members, who last year contributed over 19,000 hours of service. Within the past year, members of the agency were recognized publicly for several accomplishments including the successful resuscitation of a runner, who suffered a sudden cardiac arrest at the Monument Avenue 10k who was able to walk out of the hospital neurologically intact. Members also received by way of the Presidential Volunteer Service Awards recognition for the hours that they volunteered. One of their members was also presented with the Daily Points of Light Award on behalf of President George H.W. Bush before his passing.

Lakeside Vol. Rescue Squad is active in their community. In addition to providing community CPR training, they also patrol their first due area neighborhoods on Halloween night. You can find their members utilizing their UTV to patrol and play Halloween music while passing out candy. This activity by the agency provides an extra set of eyes and ears for the trick-or-treaters. They're also active on the regional and state levels, as they are involved with the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads, ODEMSA and various statewide initiatives. They exemplify the commitment and dedication of citizen volunteers in the Commonwealth.



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## Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunications

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunications was presented to Christina M. Austin of Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA). Christina leads a team of System Status Controllers who provide command, control, and communication for the Richmond Ambulance Authority's operations. RAA receives, processes, and dispatches over 66,000 responses each year.

Christina provides close oversight and management of their program assuring exceptional performance. In addition to her day-to-day responsibilities, she serves on a Medical Dispatch Review committee that includes quality assurance and quality improvement for the department. She is an outstanding professional with an exceptional program that she oversees.



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## **Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Emergency Preparedness and Response**

The ODEMSA Regional EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Emergency Preparedness and Response was presented to K-9 Search & Rescue Dogs, Inc. based in Richmond, VA. The members of the K-9 Search & Rescue Dogs, Inc., go through more training than most expect and are overlooked as an integral part of the emergency response system.

Handlers are required to have wilderness survival training, emergency first aid for both humans and K9's, crime scene preservation, courtroom procedures, confined space safety, swift water safety, and several NIMS courses. They must be amateur radio operators, experts in navigation with the use of a map and compass, and at record keeping. Handlers must be physically fit, and able to walk through uneven wilderness terrain, or over rubble from a fallen building. They spend countless hours preparing and learning how to train their dogs best. They're even amateur meteorologists so they can know how wind and scent patterns move to set their team up for success.

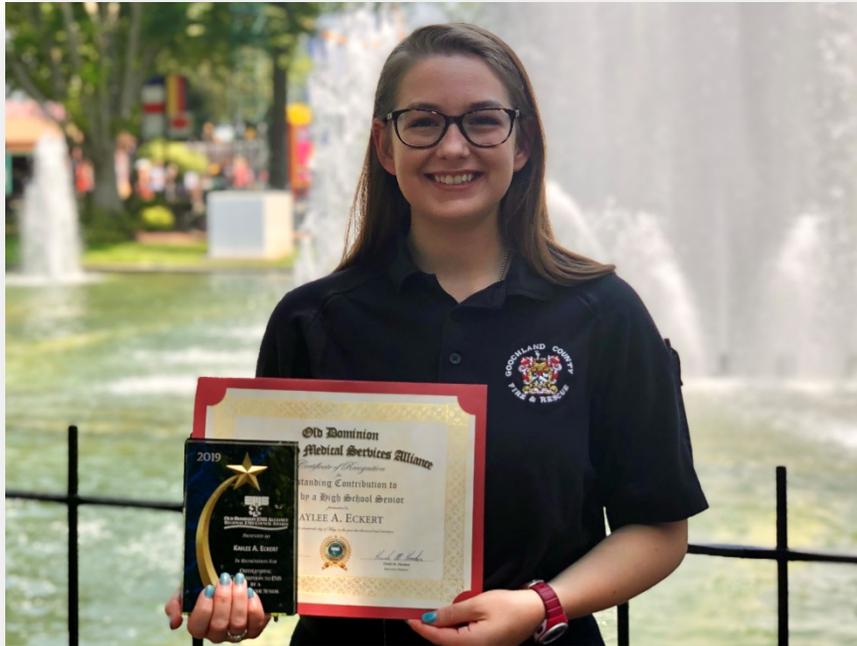
The dogs must pass several physical exams before being allowed to participate in actual searches. They must be obediently trained to the highest degree and are not afraid of anything which includes people yelling, other dogs, sirens, jackhammers, and other sources of distraction. They must be persistent and not give up, and most importantly, they must like the job and have fun searching. K-9s are utilized on ATVs/UTVs, in helicopters, planes or boats. Snow, water, mud, thick brush, briars or darkness cannot slow them down as they must be able to work in all and changing conditions because lives depend on their keen sense of smell, vision, and endurance.

Of the search and rescue teams, K9 teams are elite because they can search large areas much quicker than standard groups. The work that the K-9 teams do can be done by no other, and the work they do saves lives.



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### Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior

The ODEMSA Regional Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior was presented to Kaylee A. Eckert of Goochland County Fire-Rescue. This award was presented along with a scholarship for \$1,000 from ODEMSA.

Having a paramedic father allowed Kaylee a door, to peek through, to the world of emergency medical services. When she turned 16, she willingly walked through that door and into the Goochland County Fire and Rescue Department. Since joining, only 18 months ago, she has completed an EMT program, and is now precepting to become an “Attendant in Charge.” She regularly volunteers 120 hours a month, has recently become an NAEMT Bleeding Control Instructor, and is pursuing an AHA CPR Instructor certification. Kaylee has accomplished all of this while maintaining a high academic standing of 4.23GPA.

At her young age, she is amazingly aware of current issues and challenges within the EMS and Healthcare systems. Her senior project was on “Access to Healthcare in Rural Areas.” After learning about the problems, she set out to address what she could by spearheading a plan to teach community CPR and Bleeding Control classes to her fellow students and faculty within Goochland High School.

Though she has only been an EMT for a short time, her enthusiasm and “can do” attitude has left an impression with her agency leadership, ODEMSA and others from across the region.



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### Honorable Mention

The ODEMSA Award Selection Committee will, from time to time, have special requests. This year they requested that ODEMSA give special recognition to Smithfield Fresh Meats Corporation, North Plant Facility. The people of the North Plant Facility enhance regional training experiences in the region through their donation of educational materials to EMS providers. These materials allow providers the ability to practice life-saving skills such as tracheotomies in the classroom.

Countless lives are saved because of this invaluable training tool. ODEMSA offered special thanks to those in attendance from Smithfield and presented them with a framed certificate of appreciation for the many contributions made that have allowed for the advancement of emergency medical services training.

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#### **About the Old Dominion Emergency Medical Services Alliance**

Created in 1978, the Old Dominion EMS Alliance (ODEMSA) is a nonprofit that is charged by state law to assist in the development and implementation of an efficient and effective EMS delivery system. There are a total of 11 Regional EMS Councils across the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Old Dominion EMS Alliance is one of the largest and most diverse and is defined as the 9,000-square-mile region made up of Virginia Planning Districts 13, 14, 15 and 19. The region involves 26 hospitals, over 100 EMS agencies, and over 6,000 EMS providers. Our service area includes the counties of: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Goochland, Greensville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Surry, Sussex; the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond, and South Boston; and the towns of Ashland, Farmville and South Hill. Standing Committees within the ODEMSA structure include: Air Medical, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Hospital Diversion, Medical Direction, Mass Casualty Incident (MCI), Pharmacy, Performance Improvement, Professional Development, Regional Training Funds, STEMI Steering, Stroke Steering.