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The logo for Clarkdale Fire District is a black rectangle with the text "Clarkdale Fire District" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Press Release

Firefighter of the Year Continues to Serve

Clarkdale, AZ, September 24, 2008: Dave Acero, better known in the Phoenix area as “Fire Pal Dave” has been a firefighter in Arizona for over 33 years. He is now retired, but that hasn’t stopped him from continuing to serve.

In 2007 Dave was named United Fire Firefighter of the Year largely for his many accomplishments in public education. This prestigious award acknowledges the heroic actions of Arizona men and women who protect the people and property in their community. The winner of this annual award also receives a complete new set of custom turn-outs (the pants and coat which firefighters wear when fighting fires). It is expensive to equip a firefighter; a set of turn-outs alone costs approximately \$1,200 and can last through one fire, or up to seven years, depending on their use. Dave graciously donated his new set of turn-outs to the Clarkdale Fire Department. His generosity doesn’t stop there however. Dave has also donated to the District several other items, including other protective clothing items, rain jackets, public education materials and even new flashlights.

Dave has also decided to become a District volunteer in order to share his extensive experience with other firefighters and to continue his passion: teaching children how to be safe. During his years of being a firefighter in some of the rougher neighborhoods of Phoenix, Dave was witness to many tragedies involving children. On a number of these instances, it was already too late to save a child when Dave arrived on scene, however through teaching prevention he could make a difference.

On behalf of the Clarkdale Fire District, “Fire Pal Dave” will be working with the Clarkdale-Jerome School to teach kids about smoke detectors, fire evacuation plans, wearing seatbelts, wearing helmets, gun safety, pool safety, pedestrian safety and fire safety. Dave develops age appropriate lessons and uses puppets, magic tricks, music and humor to keep student’s attention.

Dave and his wife Anna have purchased a home in Clarkdale, where they hope to live full-time after Ann retires in a few years.

Following are excerpts from United Fire Firefighter of the Year website:

www.fdaz.com/UnitedFire/2007_winner.html

“Dave has been a firefighter with the with the Phoenix Fire Department for 33 years. For the last 21 years he has been working at Station 39 as a highly respected Engineer.

For seven years Dave volunteered at Camp Courage [a camp for children who have suffered burns] and in 1999 was selected as councilor of the year. Dave’s public education achievements have been numerous and in 2000 he was named Firefighter of the Year by the professional Firefighters Association. During his tenure with Phoenix the basic “Learn Not to Burn” program was enhanced in cooperation with teachers and firefighters to now include 39 different modules to provide a realistic and comprehensive program to help students prepare for “Urban Survival”.

By rallying together support form Goodyear & Phoenix locals, as well as community minded businesses, Dave has been able to provide annual Holiday parties at his fire station for disadvantaged families, which also illustrates to the kids the true meaning of “Christmas giving”. He really does have a Tender Heart!

Fifteen years ago, Dave started sharing the programs he learned at Phoenix Fire by volunteering with departments that had fewer resources. Dave became instrumental in helping Goodyear to develop their own excellent Urban Survival program.....

Today he is known as “Fire Pal Dave” to many Goodyear school kids. He is working with seven schools in Goodyear in addition to seven different Head Start pre-schools. But Dave’s efforts don’t end there. He reaches out to other fire departments as well and is currently partnering with the Avondale Fire Department to train additional instructors in “Community Risk Reduction”.....

When students use the information he teaches them, he looks for ways to reward them. He has recognized students with awards for saving family members from drowning, helping with car accident victims and reporting guns seen in their schools. Dave is not only a hero in our eyes, but his passion is enabling hundreds of Arizona school children to be heroes in their own communities.....”