

Utah County Employee of the Month, December 2014

William David "Dave" Bennett

Lieutenant - Enforcement Utah County Sheriff's Office

It is my honor to submit Lt. Dave Bennett for the Employee of the Month. Dave Bennett has worn many hats in his over 30 years here at the Sheriff's Office. For most of his career, he worked in Emergency Services, but also served many years in the Patrol and Investigation's division. Although he has moved on to the Judicial Services now, he still is a significant asset to our division. He has obtained so much institutional knowledge that his experience over the years has become priceless. One of his skills is that he still maintains his Bomb Tech certification and was the Bomb Squad Commander for several years. Through his efforts the team excelled and safely handled many explosive ordinance disposal calls.

As Utah County's Emergency Manager for over 11 years, he sat on the local, regional and state boards for Emergency Services and was able to share this knowledge and experience with numerous agencies around the state. His reputation among his peers in this position was beyond reproach. He is also still a board member on UCAN and provides critical insight to Utah County's radio needs.

Most significant to Emergency Services are his skills and service as a Pilot. I have flown with a lot of pilots and Dave Bennett is among the best pilots in the industry, particularly in the area of Search and Rescue Operations in mountainous areas. His abilities to spot patients and victims on the mountain along with his skills to pick a safe passage for the Search and Rescue members is unsurpassed. He knows our mountains like his own back yard and is somehow still able to spot things from above with his "Eagle Eyes." These skills expedite the response to patients often when daylight is running out and have saved many lives, many hours of searching and saved money for the Sheriff's Office. The following is an example from one of our Search and Rescue Deputies.

"My first experience with Dave Bennett looking for a lost individual in the mountains was in Hobble Creek Canyon. The man had been skiing in the wilderness area above Hobble Creek Golf Course and did not return to his vehicle. His family became worried and called for Search and Rescue. The man's vehicle was located near the golf course, but no one knew where he had traveled to from there.

The call came in well after it was dark and a storm was moving in. Dave Bennett jumped into the airplane by himself and started searching the area. Flying in the dark, with a storm moving in and in the canyon area as well, Dave spotted the man from the airplane. The man

had built a snow cave in the hillside and was inside the cave when Dave spotted the glow, under the snow, from the man's cell phone. The man had injured his knee while skiing; he was hypothermic and was ill prepared for the weather moving in and the cold temperatures in the forecast. Without Dave's skills as a pilot and his incredible ability to spot things from the air, this man surely may have not survived the night.

Dave Bennett is always willing and anxious to assist in every aspect of his assignments. Typically, Dave is on the phone calling me to see if we need his help with flying for a Search and Rescue call before Dispatch calls me. Dave Bennett has a very full plate when it comes to work. Dave works full time with the Sheriff's Office, part time with BYU Police and flies an airplane for two private plane owners. Despite this schedule, Dave always makes time to assist with Search and Rescue operations and the Utah County Bomb Squad."

The Deputy captures many outstanding skills and traits of Dave, but the most important I think is his incredible dedication and love for the job and organization. His level of professionalism and great attitude is unmatched at the office. There are so many times I have been with Dave searching for a victim, when I would have "thrown in the towel" for the day when he is driven to go around one more time as he holds on to hope for the victim. This last summer was one of our busiest yet and he was there when we needed him. The following is yet one last example from the perspective of one of our volunteers.

"Dave made a direct impact on the successful rescue of two young ladies who were lost and injured in the Mt. Nebo Wilderness Area. He was able to locate the ladies and because daylight was fading fast, dropped a cyalume (light) stick to mark their location so that AirMed would find the ladies quickly.

Dave continues to be an invaluable resource to Utah County and is among the most unassuming individuals that I know. I must add that during (literally) hundreds of hours of ride-along with Dave (Patrol and Alcohol Enforcement) and observing him in numerous arrests, I never saw him be disrespectful to any person. Dave is the type of Deputy that always brings credit to the department and to The Badge"

So again it is my privilege and honor to recommend one of our most quiet, but greatest heroes to the employee of the month. There are many who step over other people to get places in life. Dave is selfless and a true public servant and has never sought any recognition for the numerous lives he has been instrumental in saving. We salute you Dave!!!!

Submitted by Wally Perschon