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E9-1-1 Institute Salutes 2006 Heroism and Leadership

Washington, March 8, 2006 – Federal Communications Chairman Kevin Martin, an off-duty policeman who rushed into a burning building and a 10-year-old who saved his father’s life are among those being honored by the E9-1-1 Institute as recipients of the 9-1-1 Honors Awards for 2006.

The Institute was created in 2003 to support the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus and they jointly sponsor the annual awards ceremony to honor heroes and leaders in the 9-1-1 arena. The Caucus co-chairmen are Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA.) and Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL.).

“These awards show the critical importance of 9-1-1 and emergency services and recognize individuals who have shown exceptional leadership,” said Gregory L. Rohde, Executive Director of the E9-1-1 Institute. “Each of these individuals tells the story of the essential nature of E9-1-1.”

This year’s recipients are:

FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, who was given the “**Federal Government Leader**” Award. In his time on the Commission, Chairman Martin has made the deployment of E9-1-1 one of his highest priorities. Chairman Martin has worked to raise the profile of emergency communications within the Commission, from the study of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to recognizing the need for service for customers of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Loudon, Tennessee, police officer Jonathan Yates is the recipient of the “**First Responder**” Award. Yates was off duty on November 9, 2005 when he heard sirens and a dispatch call for a house on fire near his own home. Yates rushed to the scene. Without any protective equipment or breathing apparatus, he broke into the house and rescued ten year-old Melinda Torres from the burning structure. He went back into the house to look for others to rescue, but had to turn back because of the intense smoke and heat that led to the deaths of four of the house’s residents.

Ten-year-old Dustin Nelon from North Richland Hills, Texas, is the winner of its 2006 “**Citizen of the Year**” Award. Last year when his father, a diabetic, became unconscious, Dustin called 9-1-1. During an eight-minute call, Dustin answered questions from the dispatcher, took care of his father and looked out for emergency help. Dustin’s quick thinking and presence of mind saved his father’s life.

Stephen Meer, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Intrado, is the recipient of the “**Industry Professional**” Award. Meer has over twenty-five years of experience providing mission-critical information for use by telecommunications providers and public safety professionals throughout the United States. Intrado, Inc., is a global provider of integrated data and telecommunications solutions, which provides the core of North America’s 9-1-1 infrastructure and a wide range of safety and mobility offerings.

Jason Connell, a dispatcher with the Massachusetts State Police in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts helped to prevent a man from committing suicide by tracking cellular phone. He is being honored with the “**9-1-1 Call Taker**” Award. On June 14, 2005, Connell received a call from a man who said his son might commit suicide. Over the next three hours, in the middle of the night, Connell and his colleagues worked with numerous police agencies in two states and two wireless phone companies monitoring the son’s whereabouts, to track down the caller’s son halfway across the state, where police and the U.S. Coast Guard were able to rescue him.

Steve Souder, Director of Emergency Communications for Fairfax County, Virginia., is the winner of the 2006 “**Local Government Leader**” Award. Souder has more than twenty years of experience with 9-1-1 administration. He coordinated communications on Sept. 11, 2001 during the attack the Pentagon, and the sniper incidents in the Washington area in 2002. Souder is being honored for his work nationally with the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO).

The Elmore County, Alabama, E9-1-1 Program Office is the recipient of the 2006 “**Outstanding 9-1-1 Program**” Award. The Elmore County E9-1-1 office has successfully demonstrated how the transition from standard to telephony technology to Internet based communications systems can improve public safety, decrease costs, and streamline 9-1-1 operations.

Kara Lusk, an anchor and reporter for WNCT-TV in Greenville, North Carolina. Lusk is the winner of the Institute’s 2006 award in the “**Media/Entertainment**” category for increasing public understanding of the importance of 9-1-1 services. Lusk’s reporting spurred her community to upgrade its E9-1-1 capabilities. As a result of her story, six of the eleven eastern counties in North Carolina lacking wireless E9-1-1 started developing the capabilities for the service.

About the E911 Institute. The E9-1-1 Institute (www.e911institute.org) is a not-for-profit organization which provides administrative and policy support to the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus. The purpose of the E9-1-1 Institute is to promote public education and awareness of E9-1-1 and emergency communications issues and serve the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus as a clearinghouse of information on E9-1-1 and emergency communications issues. Gregory L. Rohde, former Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, serves as the E9-1-1 Institute’s Executive Director.

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