



State of Tennessee

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 299

By Bell

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend five members of the McMinn County Sheriff's Office for their heroism during a recent tornado.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is blessed with dedicated law enforcement officers who risk their personal safety, even their lives, to protect and serve their communities in times of disaster and crisis; and

WHEREAS, it is the very nature of law enforcement that its officers are often the first responders to situations that threaten the public safety, and these brave men and women continue to earn our loyalty and appreciation with their heroism and professionalism during emergencies; and

WHEREAS, five members of the McMinn County Sheriff's Office were truly heroic in their response to an EF2 tornado that struck Athens and the surrounding area on November 30, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Brian Alexander, Deputy Jerry Wattenbarger, Lieutenant Eric Allman, Detective Jared Price, and Auxiliary Deputy Brian McKinney are being honored by Sheriff Joe Guy for their courageous service during the tornado; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Alexander and Deputy Wattenbarger were literally the first two responders to the hardest hit area at Highway 307 and Deerfield Estates; after driving as close to the area as possible, the two officers obtained a four-wheeler from a resident and continued their mission off-road, traveling north through darkness, debris, high winds, heavy rain, and lightning and over downed power lines with little regard for their own safety; they made first contact with victims and transmitted damage and injury assessment information to other responders, which actions sped up the response from fire and rescue units; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Allman, Detective Price, and Auxiliary Deputy McKinney responded southward, utilizing the latter's personal four-wheel drive vehicle; also taking an off-road route, the officers braved darkness, heavy rain, high winds, debris, and lightning and crossed high-power TVA lines, risking their own safety; and

WHEREAS, they linked up with Corporal Alexander and established a safe route for other responders to travel to the scene; these officers then performed a door-to-door check of residents in Deerfield Estates and provided emergency assistance to the injured, personally rescuing several victims with improvised backboards they made from doors they located among the debris; and

WHEREAS, Sheriff Guy accorded these five officers the highest praise when he stated, "The heroic actions of these five men directly reduced the numbers of seriously injured persons, sped up overall response of all responding agencies, and had direct effect on the fact that no lives were lost in this tornado . . ."; and

WHEREAS, we wish to likewise extend our gratitude and approbation to these brave members of the McMinn County Sheriff's Office; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Corporal Brian Alexander, Deputy Jerry Wattenbarger, Lieutenant Eric Allman, Detective Jared Price, and Auxiliary Deputy Brian McKinney for their heroism in coming to the rescue of their fellow citizens during a recent tornado in McMinn County and thank them for a dangerous job well done.

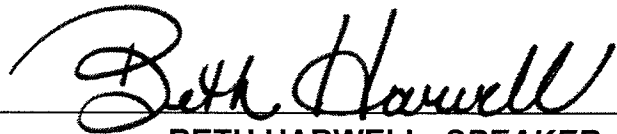
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

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ADOPTED: April 3, 2017



RANDY McNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE



BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 5th day of April 2017



BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR