

February 25, 2009

NASAR Award Committee
NASAR
Attn: Award Nomination
PO Box 232020
Centreville, VA 20120

To Whom It May Concern:

It is an honor to nominate Deputy Eric Johnson of the Pima County Sheriff's Department, Tucson, AZ, for the NASAR State Award for Arizona. Deputy Johnson has been very active at improving the professionalism and training of the SAR Coordinators in all 15 counties in the state of Arizona.

Deputy Johnson has collaborated with David Lovelock, the recipient of the 2008 Hal Foss Search and Rescue Award and the primary author of the WinCASIE software, to coordinate several major training and exercise opportunities that have significant value to the profession of search and rescue. Eric did all this while maintaining his regular responsibilities as a search and rescue coordinator and park patrol deputy for the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

In March of 2008 Eric co-organized the "Probability of Detection in the Desert" Experiment. This was an all day event aimed at estimating the PODs of grid teams searching in the Sonoran desert. Forty-four searchers from 5 counties around Arizona participated in the experiment. This event also attracted many dignitaries, including Dan O'Connor (editor of MLPI-2), Richard Toman (contributor and reviewer of MLPI-2) from Massachusetts, together with Dave Perkins and Pete Roberts (of Critical Spacing fame) from the UK. The results of the experiment are still being analyzed but it is expected that this experiment will be of great benefit to search managers conducting operations in the desert.

Starting in the summer of 2007 and continuing through the winter of 2008 Eric has helped to arrange and instruct several eight-hour hands-on workshops on the WinCASIE software for search and rescue coordinators throughout Arizona. Over 60 SAR managers have been impacted by this. (A typical summary of responses to anonymous questionnaires from one of these workshops is attached.) He has been a tremendous advocate for the use of WinCASIE software and even introduced it to several foreign countries while representing the State of Arizona at the KAZSPAS 2008 Search and Rescue Competition in the Republic of Kazakhstan in May of 2008. The WinCASIE software continues to enhance the management and planning of search and rescue operations and as a devoted advocate of the software Eric continues to enhance the capabilities of search and rescue coordinators in Arizona and beyond.

In January 2008 Deputy Johnson helped to organize a statewide table-top exercise for SAR coordinators and NPS personnel. This eight-hour exercise integrated the use of WinCASIE and the Incident Command System in several different scenarios ranging from a search that was resolved in the hasty phase to a multi-operational period search. Again Deputy Johnson partnered with David Lovelock and Richard Toman to put on this excellent training. (A summary of responses to an anonymous questionnaire is attached.) While most search and rescue operations are able to be resolved in the hasty phase practicing for the "big one" makes it easier to handle when it inevitably does arise. Law enforcement sometimes seems to lag behind other emergency response agencies in understanding and using ICS and the exercises that Eric helped to devise aided in refining and refreshing the ICS skills that the search and rescue

coordinators already had. NASAR Board Member Dan Hourihan was present to observe the exercise and commented that he felt that it was a very worthwhile training. This exercise is to be repeated in March for the Cochise County SAR Coordinators who missed it because they were called out on a search at that time.

As was previously mentioned Eric was selected to be part of an eight-member delegation sponsored by the Arizona National Guard to attend the KAZSPAS 2008 International Search and Rescue Competition in the Republic of Kazakhstan for two weeks in May 2008. This event attracted participants from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan. The primary purpose of the Arizona delegation was to observe the competition and foster cooperation and goodwill between the State of Arizona and Kazakhstan. Several of the participating teams were interested in our operations so Eric helped to put together a technical rescue demonstration for the participants at the competition that was very well received. The Arizona delegation was presented with a Friendship Trophy by the director of the competition at the conclusion of the event.

Deputy Eric Johnson is committed to the search and rescue profession and making SAR coordinators more efficient and effective. To that end I believe that Deputy Eric Johnson is deserving of the NASAR State Award for the State of Arizona.

Respectfully submitted,

Sgt. Aaron Dick
Search and Rescue Coordinator
Coconino County Sheriff's Office
Flagstaff, AZ

Statement from David Lovelock, Tucson, AZ

I have read the nomination of Eric Johnson by Aaron Dick and enthusiastically support it. Eric is a delight to work with and he has made an enormous impact on the level of professionalism of SAR teams throughout Arizona. I can think of no one more worthy of this award.