

Multi-talented officer is '99 Officer of the Year

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Saying Joe Schornack means a lot to the city of Farmington's Public Safety Department would be an understatement.

Besides being a police officer and firefighter — as in everyone among the 22 full-timers on the force — the 28-year veteran also is:

- the city's fire marshal;
- the department training officer for firefighting and emergency medical service;
- a member of its accident investigation team;
- a state fire inspector and one of about nine emergency medical technicians in the department.

But he's also something else

that makes him near and dear to the hearts of those who patrol Farmington's streets, help its sick and injured and fight its fires: Joe Schornack is a cook — and a good one, too.

"Yes, he's been known to bring in a slow-cooker during the hunting season," laughed Gary Goss, Farmington public safety director. "He's cooked up some pretty good meals for us."

Venison? "Yes — when he's lucky," Goss teased Schornack, who hunts and also fishes.

But it is PSO-1 Joseph R. Schornack's dedication to duty and to community that recently garnered him honors as Farmington's 1999 Officer of the Year.

"Often, we recognize individual efforts related to a specific instance," said Goss in honoring the public safety officer at the

awards presentation.

Tirelessly

"However, we rarely recognize those who work tirelessly day in and day out to improve the safety and quality of life in our community."

Schornack is such a person, Goss said.

"No other individual on our department has done more to protect life and property and to guarantee the safety of our community," said the safety director.

Schornack's fire-safety inspections "have taken our code enforcement and fire prevention to new levels never before experienced in our community," said Goss.

And Schornack protects his fellow officers by regularly training and updating them in both fire fighting and medical response; by inspecting firefighting equipment weekly and by using his extensive knowledge — he has bachelor's degrees in both criminal justice and fire science — to draw up plans for emergencies.

Schornack's "attention to detail is essential and comforting when we are called to a fire," Goss said.

"We know that the engines and equipment will operate when we need them" and department commanders "rely on his extensive knowledge at each fire scene," said Goss.

But Schornack also "never forgets that he is a public safety officer," said Goss. "He is there to fill in on the shifts and, as an EMT, an arson investigator and crime scene technician, he is invaluable."

Special tasks

The department also has



Honored: Farmington Public Safety Officer Joe Schornack earned the 1999 Officer of the Year Award recently. He's not only deeply involved in his own job, but he is a part-time firefighter in Farmington Hills, as well.

called on him for special tasks like developing specifications for a new fire truck, improving the city's state-reporting procedures and researching equipment or techniques "that will improve our department's service to our community," said Goss.

Not surprisingly, Schornack has a law enforcement heritage: besides having a cousin with the Livonia police, his grandfather was a Detroit cop while one uncle was a Redford Township officer and another was a U.S. Marshal.

"When I was little, I was impressed," Schornack grinned. He would later embark on what he called "continuous education": a criminal justice degree, then an associate's in fire science and finally the bachelor's.

Memorable events in his career include the airplane that crashed through the roof at the old Farmer Jack's on Farmington Road in the 1970s, but killed no one and caused no fire, and the tornado that tore up West Bloomfield, also in the '70s.

He worked that one as part of a mutual aid agreement between neighboring communities, but he's also a part-time firefighter in Farmington Hills.

"It's been very interesting and challenging," Schornack said, adding "One of the best perks is the different people that you meet."

"I've been doing it almost 28 years. I guess I've met more good people than bad."

Schornack has two stopdaughters with wife Dorie.

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Farmington officers tapped for awards

Police Commander John F. Coyle, who single-handedly captured an armed robber apparently bent on a robbing spree, has received a departmental commendation from the city of Farmington Public Safety Department.

Coyle was among those honored May 24 at the Farmington Training Center during the annual awards banquet.

Public Safety Officer-1 James P. Madigan received one lifesaving award and shared another with fellow officer Frank Demers and Suzie Olsen, the daughter of the man whose life they saved.

Coyle was on patrol Nov. 6 when the man, armed with a long butcher knife, robbed the Village Animal Clinic of a vial of the animal anesthetic ketamine, which causes humans to hallucinate.

When Coyle, acting alone

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