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BLM ROYAL GORGE NEWS

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BLM Royal Gorge Field Office employees win Valor Award for actions during Wetmore Fire

CANON CITY, Colo. – Bureau of Land Management Royal Gorge Field Office employees Jonathan Brewer and Tyler Webb were honored last week at the 70th Honor Awards Convocation of the Department of the Interior at its headquarters in Washington, D.C. The Valor Award is the highest award given by the Department of Interior and recognizes employees who have demonstrated unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger.

Firefighters Brewer and Webb were assisting local law enforcement personnel in evacuating residents in the path of the advancing Wetmore Fire in October 2012. The Wetmore Fire was an extremely fast moving wind driven fire that consumed approximately 1,800 acres and 14 residences during the first afternoon and evening of initial attack.

Brewer and Webb were told of civilians that were in the path of the quickly advancing Wetmore Fire. They made the decision to drive through smoke toward the fire so they could locate the civilians. By the time they reached the civilians, it was too dangerous to exit, so Brewer and Webb located a safe zone to gather until the danger passed. There were two different waves of flames, wind and smoke that came over the group. Because of good situational awareness, both employees were able to remove themselves along with civilians and vehicles from what could have been a tragic outcome.

“John Brewer and Ty Webb went above and beyond the call of duty with their actions during the Wetmore Fire,” said Keith Berger, BLM Royal Gorge Field Manager. “It is a privilege to work with these outstanding gentlemen and the Valor Award recognition is well deserved.”

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.



Jonathan Brewer and Tyler Webb receive the Valor Award from Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell.