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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Employees Honored as Heroes by Red Cross

Four Men Aide Rescue Of A Trespasser from Power Pole

Four Metro-North Railroad employees were honored for heroism on Thursday by the Connecticut Region of the American Red Cross for their role in helping rescue a trespasser from an overhead power line on the New Haven Line and preventing additional injuries to West Haven firefighters.

District Superintendent Phil Wilhelmy, of Seymour, CT, and three Power Department employees, Bob Doody, of North Branford, CT, Mike Buonaiuto, of Milford, CT, and Frank Langston of Stratford, CT, were named as the organization's 2012 Heroes of Greater New Haven.

On March 17, 2011, Wilhelmy heard a dispatch from the railroad's Operations Control Center about a person caught in one of the transmission poles. He rushed to the scene where a man was dangling from one of the cross arms. West Haven Fire Department personnel were on the scene already planning a course of action.

"I arrived just as a firefighter started climbing up the tower," Wilhelmy said. "I ran over and stopped him because the wire was still 'live.' At 13,000 volts, it can kill you!"

As the Fire Department formed a command center, Wilhelmy called the Metro-North Power Department to de-energize, test and ground the wire before letting the rescue begin. And as is protocol, Power personnel secured proper clearance from the Power Control Center, tested and applied workman grounds before giving the "all clear" for the rescue. The trespasser was removed from the wire and no injuries to the responders were incurred.

"Phil is a great asset at Metro-North," said Metro-North President Howard Permut. "Every day, he demonstrates his professionalism. In responding to potentially deadly incidents—such the one for which he is being recognized today— he shows that he lives by Metro-North's No. 1 rule, safety first."

"Bob, Mike and Frank's fast implementation of safety protocols insured that no one, especially the West Haven firefighters, got injured. Safe work practices must always be followed regardless of the apparent urgency of a situation," Permut said.

"These four men are a credit to Metro-North," Permut added. "They make us all proud."

Every year the Red Cross salutes men, women and youth from Greater New Haven whose extraordinary acts of courage and kindness makes them local heroes. The Metro-North employees were recognized today at the Red Cross' Annual Heroes Breakfast of Greater New Haven.