



## Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Fire Rescue

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Today's Date: April 7, 2011

### **VETERANS RECOGNIZE FIREFIGHTER BRAVERY DURING DEADLY CITRA BLAZE**

Immediate Release

(Photo/interview opportunities available)

- WHO:** Marion County Fire Rescue Lt. Miguel Ortiz, firefighter/paramedic Ronald Sanford and the Marion County Veterans Council
- WHAT:** 13th Annual Law Officer and Firefighter Awards Banquet
- WHEN:** Friday, April 8, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** American Legion Post 284 (5515 SE 109th St., Belleview)
- WHY:** In November 2010, firefighters from MCFR Citra Station 2 responded to a deadly structure fire that took the lives of five children and left three adults severely injured. The firefighters who responded to this incident risked their lives in their attempt to save the victims.

The Marion County Veterans Council will recognize Lt. Miguel Ortiz and firefighter/paramedic Ronald Sanford as their organization's Firefighters of the Year. This award is given to first responders who go above and beyond their normal duties.

While dozens of firefighters worked to safely extinguish the Citra blaze, Ortiz and Sanford were the initial crew to go inside the home to search for victims. During their search, they discovered two unresponsive pediatric females, ages 6 and 12. Upon discovering both children, Ortiz and Sanford worked simultaneously to battle flames and carry the victims to safety. Only a few moments later, an evacuation alarm was issued, commanding all crews inside the home to leave immediately.

Both patients were transported to local hospitals and confirmed deceased by hospital officials. Although firefighters were unable to revive both victims, Ortiz and Sanford put their lives on the line to save the two victims.

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*"Meeting Needs by Exceeding Expectations"*