

Six Bavarian fire departments share “Fire Department Team 2015” title

2015 Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize sponsored by the “White Helmets” / Bavarian teamwork by volunteer fire brigades from Lauf an der Pegnitz, Neunkirchen am Sand, Ottensoos, Reichenschwand, Rüblanden and Speikern prevail / Awards Ceremony with around 700 guests in Ulm / International Award goes to Rio de Janeiro

Ulm, 23 January 2016

There was scarcely any more room on the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize winners’ podium on 22 January 2016 in the Congress Center Ulm. Thanks to outstanding cooperation between the Lauf an der Pegnitz, Neunkirchen am Sand, Ottensoos, Reichenschwand, Rüblanden and Speikern volunteer fire departments, six Bavarian teams came out on top – as winners of the title “Fire Department Team 2015”. Accompanied by loud cheering from the approximately 700 guests, they took the prize for their rescue of an injured man who was jammed into the interior of his automobile after a serious traffic accident. The “Disaster Response Rauschenhammermühle” team (Bavaria) also won the title “Fire Department Team of the Year”. Together with the Reutlingen Fire Department (Baden Württemberg), it was among the top three. The Disaster Response Rauschenmühle unites over 60 Bavarian fire departments under a common name.

The winners of the coveted “Oscar of the fire-fighting sector” were handed their trophies this year by the “White Helmets”, the Syrian disaster relief organisation that sponsored the 2015 Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize. “Every fire department’s job is to save human lives under extreme conditions. What the ‘White Helmets’ do every day, however, is far beyond what we can imagine. To work under the hazardous conditions that currently prevail in Syria, often without suitable equipment, deserves our greatest respect. We are thus very happy to have won the ‘White Helmets’ as a sponsor for the 2015 Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize,” said Andreas Klauser, interim CEO of Magirus. The fact that this award unites people throughout the world was impressively demonstrated by the presentation of the international prize. In a moving moment, the Syrian rescue workers handed their colleagues from Iran, Turkey and Brazil their trophies, proving that the prize and the common voluntary commitment of all involved overcomes political borders.

In addition to Andreas Klauser, interim CEO of Magirus, the prominent guests at the celebration included many from the fire-fighting sector as well as Antonio Benedetti, former CEO of Magirus, Hartmut Ziebs, President of the German Fire Department Association, Albert Kern, President of the Austrian National Fire Department Association and Ivo Gönner, Mayor of the city of Ulm. “Most people have some knowledge of what the fire department does. But they often do not really know

what this entails: a commitment to saving others every day, around the clock at the risk of their own lives. This is precisely why the Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize brings this commitment to the centre of public attention,” says Andreas Klauser, interim CEO of Magirus. For the first time, a special prize in the category “Social Commitment” was given in 2015. The Wennigloh fire-fighting team of the Arnsberg Fire Department (North Rhine-Westphalia) won the prize; its members received the award for their joint fire-fighting exercise with mentally disabled men.

Textbook performance saves critical time

From rescues in death-defying heights to major inner-city conflagrations to serious traffic accidents – the spectrum of fire department work is broad. No situation is like any other. Just how important theory is for practice, however, is shown by the performance of the winners of the national competition. A 40-year-old man was so badly trapped in his automobile after a serious traffic accident that the team was obliged to rely on an unusual procedure. All previously attempted rescue methods had failed, at which point the crew members pulled apart the wreck using chains attached at the front and rear ends of the vehicle – the so-called “Oslo method”. They could then free the man, who was wedged in the footwell of the automobile between trees and a traffic sign, and who had sustained life-threatening injuries. The “Oslo method” was invented in Scandinavia and was at one time fairly common. It is now used primarily when it would take too long to free accident victims with rescue shears and a spreader, or when not enough rescue shears are available to fire departments in rural areas. In the area around Nuremberg, this technique is taught to all trainees. In the mission carried out by the Lauf an der Pegnitz, Neunkirchen am Sand, Ottensoos, Reichenschwand, Rüblanden and Speikern volunteer fire departments, it brought about a rescue in the last second, due to the life-threatening situation.

The missions entered in the contest impressively show the pressure that fire department crew members face and the breadth of tasks and dangers they are confronted with daily. Numerous cities and municipalities applied for the German prize. A jury of specialists selected the best from all of these applications and put them online for public voting at www.feuerwelt.de. In the end, the Bavarian team had obtained the most votes.

The “White Helmets” – outstanding disaster relief in Syria

They owe their name to their white protective headgear. The “White Helmets” is the name of the Syria Civil Defence (SCD), a volunteer organisation of almost 3000 Syrians who respond to the aftermath of terror in a total of 110 centres throughout the country in such places as Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, Hama and Damascus. Their commitment extends from electronic early warning systems and planning evacuations, to fire-fighting missions and rescuing injured persons, all the way to setting up emergency supplies, including medical support. Since their foundation in 2013, the “White Helmets”

have rescued over 40,000 lives. This is why they are sponsoring both the international as well as the national Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize. "In conflict zones, fire departments and rescue organisations take on very special importance. This valuable project shows the extent to which volunteers commit themselves in all essential areas. We are thus overjoyed that we could win the 'White Helmets' as a sponsor for the 2015 Conrad Dietrich Magirus Prize," said Andreas Klauser.

Trip to New York

The winners of the "Oscar of the fire-fighting sector" are in for a treat! The Lauf an der Pegnitz, Neunkirchen am Sand, Ottensoos, Reichenschwand, Rüblanden and Speikern volunteer fire departments will take a ten-person team to the most well-known fire department in the world: the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) – flight, accommodations and exciting programme included. In addition to tours of various fire stations and the Training Academy "The Rock", they will also visit the most modern fireboats in the world.

International award

But not only the national "Oscar of the fire-fighting sector" was presented; the international fire department team of the year 2015 was also selected. The Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) fire department prevailed against strong competition from nine nations. During the city's world famous carnival, a fire broke out in one of its largest suburban shopping malls. Even some walls collapsed. 100 crew members from ten stations rushed to the scene. With 30 vehicles and two helicopters, they ensured that 80 percent of the building could be saved from the flames. The top three finalists also included the Isfahan fire department (Iran) and the Istanbul fire department (Turkey), who were likewise invited to Germany and honoured at the celebration in front of international fire-fighting specialists, along with further online finalists.

About Magirus

Passion and precision, high-tech and craftsmanship. Since 1864, Magirus has stood for the combination between innovation and tradition – to assist fire-fighters throughout the world. With a comprehensive range of the most modern and reliable fire engines, turntable ladders, rescue and equipment vehicles, special solutions, pumps and portable pumps, Magirus is known throughout the world as one of the largest and technologically leading providers of fire-fighting and disaster control technology.

Press contact

Talk of Town. Wächter & Wächter
Petra Schlingensiepen
Lindwurmstrasse 88
D-80337 Munich

Corporate contact

MAGIRUS GmbH
Tobias Knebel
Graf-Arco-Strasse 30
D-89079 Ulm

Phone +49(0)89 / 74 72 42 – 96

Fax +49(0)89 / 74 72 42 – 60

p.schlingensiepen@waechter-waechter.de

Phone +49 (0)731 408 2209

Fax +49 (0)731 408 2410

tobias.knebel@cnhind.com