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“EVERYDAY HERO CT” PROGRAM URGES RESIDENTS TO “ADOPT A HYDRANT” ***“Help Us Help You,” Says Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment Campaign***

January 18, 2016 | Cromwell, CT – While Mother Nature has yet to dump significant snow on Connecticut this winter, meteorologists predict it will happen. In preparation for the big event, the Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign is urging local residents to take notice of hydrants now while they’re easy to spot and “adopt” those nearest to their homes and offices. When the snow falls, it’s important for the community to come together to keep hydrants clear of snow and ice.

“A snow covered hydrant could be the difference between life and death,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association Volunteer Workforce Solutions program manager. “Most towns have hundreds of hydrants, and if the one firefighters need to provide water for a fire is covered in snow we lose precious minutes. For a volunteer fire department, digging out each of those hydrants after a snow storm is a huge job. We’re asking everyone in towns that have hydrants to simply adopt the hydrant nearest their home and make sure it’s accessible.”

To expose a snow covered fire hydrant, use a shovel to dig out and clear a full three-foot area around the hydrant. For those with elderly or disabled neighbors, the Department recommends lending a helping hand.

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Chief Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they’ll ever have.”

About Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS)

A partnership of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the Volunteer Workforce Solutions’ (VWS) Everyday Hero CT campaign is a two-year initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce for 15 Connecticut fire departments: Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Department, Cromwell Fire and EMS Department, Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (Salem), Greenwich Fire Department, Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department, Middlefield Volunteer Fire Company, Old Mystic Fire Department, Rocky Hill Fire Department, Somers Fire Department, Stamford Volunteer Firefighters Association, Trumbull Volunteer Fire Services, Westfield Fire Department (Middletown), Windsor Volunteer Fire Department, Wolcott Fire Department. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit www.EverydayHeroCT.org.

About the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. (CFCA)

Organized in 1902, the CFCA represents approximately 700 fire service professionals, both career and volunteer, from across the state of Connecticut. The mission of the organization is to promote the position of Chief Fire Officers as the leaders of the fire service through continuing education, unity in the fire service, safety, and professionalism as a fire officer. The association is involved in legislative issues, training, regulatory, and many other facets of the fire service. For more information, visit www.ConnecticutFireChiefs.com.

About the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)

The IAFC represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world’s leading experts in firefighting, EMS, terrorism response, hazmat spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public-safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its

members to exchange ideas, develop professionally, and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders. For more information, visit www.iafc.org.

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