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News Release

IAEM-USA Announces the 2024 Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award

Oct. 22, 2024 (Falls Church, Va.) – The Awards & Recognition Committee of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) has selected Mark Ihrig, CEM, for the IAEM-USA 2024 Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award. The award will be presented at the President’s Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Nov. 20 at the 72nd IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Mark Ihrig, JD, CEM, CKEM IAEM-USA Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award Recipient

Mr. Mark Ihrig, JD, CEM, CKEM, is recognized for his remarkable career achievements over the past 36 years of service as a public servant and local emergency manager in Boone County, Kentucky.

Mr. Ihrig’s public safety career began at Ludlow Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter in 1988, shortly after his 18th birthday. He became an emergency medical technician in 1989 and went to law school at night, earning a Juris Doctor from Northern Kentucky University’s Salmon P. Chase College of Law in 1994. From 1991 to 2000, he practiced law as a law clerk, pretrial officer, and assistant county attorney. During this time, he maintained an active role as a volunteer EMT with Ludlow and later the City of Florence Fire/EMS, where he stayed until 2006.

In 2000, Mr. Ihrig started serving Boone County as a full-time emergency management deputy director and became the county director in 2010. Throughout his career, Mark proactively seized opportunities to engage at all levels. His participation with multiple state and national organizations led to improvements not just in Boone County but across Kentucky, leading him to be considered one of Kentucky’s most respected practitioners.

His drive as an emergency manager is characterized by strategic foresight, effective communication, and a steadfast commitment to providing superior public service. Not only did Mr. Ihrig influence his community, but he also influenced others as a longtime member of the Kentucky Emergency

Management Association, where he served as a regional vice president five times and helped develop the Certified Kentucky Emergency Manager program. His influence was also seen while serving on the IAEM Region 4 leadership team and the FEMA Regional Advisory Council.

Always looking to make a difference, Mr. Ihrig volunteered considerable time helping the Boy Scouts of America. During the 2019 World Scout Jamboree, he helped coordinate emergency planning, response, and security for over 40,000 youth and leaders.

In September 2023, Mr. Ihrig was inducted into the Kentucky Emergency Management Hall of Fame. In February 2024, he retired as the Boone County Emergency Management director. Mr. Ihrig's remarkable career accomplishments, influential leadership, and deep community involvement make him highly deserving of the 2024 Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award. His exceptional contributions embody the qualities and values that this award seeks to recognize.

The Clayton R. Christopher Memorial Award recognizes the career achievements of an emergency management director/coordinator at the local level of government for outstanding contributions and commitment to a local emergency management program.

IAEM-USA, the nation's largest emergency management professional association, is a non-profit organization representing more than 5,800 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance, the Certified Emergency Manager program, annual scholarships, a comprehensive monthly newsletter, and more.

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