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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County Fire Rescue performs 4 technical rescues in a week

July 31, 2017 – Including rescuing a motorist who crashed into a pole using the “Jaws of Life” Monday morning, Flagler County Fire Rescue has performed four technical rescues in the course of a week.

“There was a crash just this morning near County Road 304 where our team had to use the Jaws of Life to rescue the gentleman from his vehicle after he crashed into an FP&L power pole,” Chief Don Petito said. “He was having a medical issue, hit the pole and the pole came down on top of his vehicle.”

Flagler County’s FireFlight helicopter airlifted the man to Halifax Health Medical Center in Daytona Beach. The patient’s name and condition are not currently available.

FireFlight worked in coordination with Fire Rescue’s marine rescue team Saturday evening after two kayakers and an inflatable boat were washed out to sea as a storm approached.



“FireFlight found the missing kayak and the inflatable boat and directed the marine rescue jet skis to the area,” Petito said. “The boat had deflated to the point where the person on board needed help. The kayakers were far enough out that they also needed help.”

The two jet skis were used to get the boaters and their vessels back to shore.

On July 26, Flagler County’s Technical Rescue Team helped the Palm Coast Fire Department rescue a contractor working for the city’s utility department from the top of the main water tower after he became ill.

Earlier that day – 6 a.m. July 26 – Flagler County Fire Rescue’s marine rescue crews helped three occupants of two boats that had collided broadside with one another on the Intracoastal Waterway near Washington Oaks State Park. One of the boats capsized.

“Two people were showing no obvious signs of distress, but one person had obvious injuries,” Petito said. “The two uninjured victims were able to swim to shore unassisted, but the third was stabilized on a long spine board, evacuated from the water and then transported to Florida Hospital Flagler.”

The State Fire Marshal’s Office in 2002 established Light Technical Rescue Teams. Initially, 53 teams were established though those numbers have dropped to the 42 still in existence today – including Flagler County’s team number 312. The Department of Homeland Security and the State Homeland Security Grant Program fund.

More than half of Flagler County’s fire rescue personnel make up the 45-member team 312. The marine rescue team division has 25 members trained to the technical level and 10 trained to the operations level.

Flagler County’s 80 firefighter-paramedics collectively train more than 30,000 hours annually. Several of these firefighter-paramedics are trainers themselves.

Technical Rescue Trainers include: Lt. Jason Powell, leader; firefighter-paramedic Dennis Moore, lead trainer; and lieutenants (brothers) Andrew and John Keppler; both shift leaders.

Marine Rescue Trainers include: Lt. Jason Forte, lead trainer; Lt. Mike Pius, trainer; and Lt. Andrew Hardesty, trainer.

“Flagler County is very proud to have such a dedicated staff in our Fire Rescue Department,” County Administrator Craig Coffey said. “There are a lot of situations that don’t come up every day, but it’s nice to know that our men and women are ready for them when they do.”

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