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Professionalism, leadership, and knowledge were words used to describe Burleson Fire Lt. Jeremiah Lozier, who was awarded the department's Fire Officer of the Year honor at the annual fire banquet Jan. 14.

Lozier, a career firefighter with Burleson since November 1999, was described by fellow firefighter Bill Buchanan - who worked with the lieutenant on the Aug. 3, 2011, tower rescue - as a fire officer who "had confidence in the crew he was working with and allowed them to function freely to their maximum potential. During all of the public appearances since the rescue, he has represented the department with true professionalism."

The lieutenant's own crew – firefighters Matt Moseley and Kevin Hunter – said Lozier "is always the first one to tell you if you are doing something wrong, not to belittle you, but because he wants you to become the best firefighter you can be. Yet he is always the first one to congratulate you on a job well done . . . He is a great motivator and encourages us to better ourselves, not only as firefighters, but as people."

Lozier is a 1994 graduate of Burleson High School. He started with the fire department as a volunteer in the summer of 1996. Mark Crawford, who he lists as one of his most influential mentors, was the training coordinator.

Lozier earned his basic state fire certification in April 1999, but the fire service wasn't the only public safety field he was pursuing. Lozier graduated from the North Central Texas Council of Government Regional Police Academy in May 1997. He served as a reserve deputy for Johnson County Constable Precinct 2, and then worked for the Tarrant County Hospital District (John Peter Smith Hospital) as a police officer. He left Tarrant County in 1998 and went to work for the Johnson County Sheriff's Office as a patrol deputy. While working as a deputy, the Burleson Fire Department put Lozier through EMT (emergency medical technician) school. His role as a volunteer firefighter evolved into a career firefighter position with Burleson in 1999.

"I wanted to work at the Burleson Fire Department because it is my hometown and I wanted to be a firefighter where I live," Lozier said.

The lieutenant is certified as an advanced firefighter, fire inspector, fire instructor II, fire officer II, hazardous materials technician, swift water rescue technician, high angle rescue technician, driver operator, and EMT Intermediate.

The award winner's mentors include his grandmother Helen Ellis who taught him perseverance; former Burlison High School teacher/coach Pam Lea who "is the only reason I graduated;" and, his wife Michelle Lozier "who mentors me every day. '

Lozier and his wife share two daughters, 11-year-old Sydney who is a student at Hughes Middle School and 9-year-old Emma who is a student at the Academy at Nola Dunn. The family also includes a Schnorkie named Boomer and a Yorkie named Landry.