

For Immediate Release

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Carlsbad Combat Challenge Team Honored By State Legislators

Members of the Carlsbad Fire Department's Combat Challenge Team received a standing ovation after being introduced to the New Mexico House of Representatives on March 2.

"It's not every day that you set a world record," observed Representative Cathrynn Brown, the Eddy County legislator who invited the firefighters to Santa Fe's Roundhouse. "But this is what our guests have done."

Last year, the members of the team, Brad Carlsen, Jay Carter, Todd Vannatter, Geronimo Ontiveros and Casey Collins, set the world record in the relay competition of the Scott Safety Firefighter Combat Challenge with a time of 1:04. They went on to win the world championship. The same year, they also won the national title and earned the most points throughout the season to become grand national champions.

After introducing members of the Carlsbad team, as well as Carlsbad Fire Chief Rick Lopez, Rep. Brown told her fellow legislators that the competition involves completing a difficult course while wearing full bunker gear. She then directed a clerk to read the certificate honoring the firefighters, which explained that success in the competition shows dedication to protecting the public. The state's legislators then provided a standing ovation in honor of the Carlsbad team, who were positioned next to the Speaker of the House during the morning session. Rep. Brown also invited her fellow legislators to inspect the world title trophy, on display at the front of the chamber.

"It's a really impressive trophy, on order with the Stanley Cup, in my opinion," Brown stated, noting that members of the team often practice in the extreme heat. "These competitions come down to the hundreds of thousands of a second, and this is the team that holds the world record. That's an amazing achievement."

The firefighters were also given a tour of the Roundhouse during their visit to Santa Fe.

"The members of our Combat Challenge Team are a credit to Carlsbad and their success shows our fire department's commitment to public safety," said Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway. "The combat challenge is a test that simulates actual rescue scenarios. Thank you to Rep. Brown and the House of Representatives for providing these heroes with well-deserved accolades and showing the state what

Carlsbad is all about.”

