



Office of the Fire/EMS Chief
312 W. Whitewater Street
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

www.whitewater-wi.gov
Telephone: (262) 473-0116

September 12, 2025

Nomination Letter
2025 First Responder of the Year – 43rd Assembly District

Name of person nominated: **Ryan Dion**

Name of person making the nomination: **Chief Kelly Freeman**

Nominee's position: **Assistant Chief**

Dear Representative Brown,

I am honored to nominate Assistant Chief Ryan Dion for the 2025 First Responder of the Year for the 43rd Assembly District. Assistant Chief Dion has been an outstanding asset to the Whitewater Fire Department throughout his 18 years of service, demonstrating dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to both his department and community.

AC Dion's career is marked by service to his country and community. He proudly served on active duty in the United States Army, where he was deployed to Iraq, and upon returning, continued his call to service by joining the Whitewater Fire Department while attending Blackhawk Technical College, pursuing a degree in Fire Protection. Over the years, he has risen through the ranks, serving as Firefighter/EMT, Lieutenant, Captain, and now Assistant Chief. Prior to his current role, he also dedicated 13 years as a career firefighter/EMT with the City of Waukesha Fire Department, further strengthening his expertise and leadership in the fire service.

AC Dion's knowledge and skills are extensive, ranging from firefighting to technical rescue, and he is equally recognized as an outstanding EMT. Since stepping into the full-time Assistant Chief position, he has made remarkable contributions to the Whitewater Fire Department, including implementing a new report management system, leading the department's involvement in the Walworth County radio project, and spearheading the development of a state-of-the-art training facility worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

His commitment extends beyond administrative leadership. AC Dion frequently volunteers for additional shifts as the officer on duty during nights and weekends, providing critical support outside of his regular responsibilities. He also plays a key role in community relations, effectively presenting to township boards the formula used to calculate service fees in a way that residents can easily understand, fostering trust and confidence in the department's mission.

AC Dion is truly a journeyman of the trade—a leader, mentor, and advocate for the department and community. His dedication, vision, and tireless work ethic make him not only invaluable to the Whitewater Fire Department but also to the broader community it serves.

For his exemplary service, leadership, and commitment, I can think of no one more deserving of the 2025 First Responder of the Year award than Assistant Chief Ryan Dion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" at the end.

Kelly Freeman
Fire/EMS Chief