

## NEWS RELEASE

6:00 PM Saturday, June 9, 2012

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### Fallen Firefighter is Escorted Home

Engine Boss Anthony Polk, 31, who died Friday, June 8 on the Montezuma Fire, “devoted his life to assuring the safety of others before himself,” said Keeny Escalanti Sr., Quechan Tribal President in Yuma, AZ. Anthony was a member of the Quechan/San Carolos Apache Indian Tribe and provided Fiduciary Trust services to the Quechan and Cocopah Indian tribes.

A graduate of San Pasqual High School, Anthony lived in Yuma most of his life surrounded by an extensive family. While in school, Anthony was a member of the athletic club. After graduating, he attended the Fort Yuma Academy for Firefighters.

His training, experience and dedication led him to a full-time position with the Fort Yuma Agency where he became a leader of the Prescribed Fire Operations/Fuels Program. He was a Firing Boss and Incident Commander Type 4 as well as an Engine Boss, and training to be a Fire Investigator and a Burn Boss. He worked with several organizations including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, BLM, BOR, FWS, and local fire departments. His responsibility was to all five tribes along the Colorado River regarding the fuels program.

He served 10 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and will be remembered as a teacher among his co-workers and as a dedicated firefighter in the community, said Agency Superintendent Irene Herder.

During one incident near home in 2010, Anthony was a firefighter among many who saved seven homes near the Arizona border along the Colorado River from a large brushfire. Local fire department officials said at the time, they requested assistance from BIA and BLM crews who coordinated the use of brush trucks in the rough terrain.

"Where the fire originated from, it spread to the west and we got in there with units from BIA and BLM and were able to save four or five trailers which had two families that lived in them," Steve Taylor, Winterhaven Fire Department Chief was quoted in a May 6, 2010 issue of the Yuma Sun. This picture of Anthony, shared by his home unit, was taken on that fire two years ago.

Drexel Heights Fire Department personnel lined Ajo Highway on Friday, saluting a fallen comrade as his body was taken from the fireline to Tucson.

Today, by order of Gov. Jan Brewer, all state flags are flown at half-staff until sunset in honor of a firefighter killed in the line of duty. His body, which is being escorted to Yuma this afternoon, should arrive home by then.

He is survived by a five-year-old daughter, his mother, Ramona Villa, grandmother, Lucinda Polk and numerous relatives and friends.

