

'WONDERFUL TRIBUTE'

Area police, fire departments honor Newport Hospital workers



Employees of Newport Hospital wave to members of local police and fire departments as they drive by the hospital Monday. [PETER SILVIA PHOTOS]

By Laura Damon
Daily News staff reporter

NEWPORT — Some hospital staff members started to slowly trickle outside Monday afternoon as the distant wailing of sirens grew louder and didn't let up.

But it wasn't tragedy or a crisis that conjured the rescue wagons, fire engines and police cruisers. Members of the Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth, Jamestown, Bristol, Tiverton and Little Compton police and fire departments, along with Rhode Island State Police, came to show their support and appreciation for Newport Hospital staff.

Between 20 and 30 apparatus circled Newport Hospital



Several police and fire departments from the East Bay honored the workers at Newport Hospital on Monday afternoon.

around 3 p.m., beeping their horns and blasting their sirens as masked hospital staff congregated on Powel Avenue, just outside the entrance, and waved.

"I'd say the main reason is to show our appreciation for the Hospital Staff. Every one of us can't say we don't know someone working at a hospital somewhere. My wife is an ER Nurse at Charlton, my sister in law is a Nurse at Charlton, my brother in law is the EMS Director of Swansea Ambulance," Portsmouth police patrolman Bruce Celico said in an email to The Daily News.

Celico, along with

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Portsmouth police officer Jeanemarie Stewart, spearheaded the procession.

"As much as we [police and fire department members] are out here doing our best to protect each city and town, depending on what jurisdiction you work in, you may not have any contact with the public for your entire shift," Celico added. "Hospital staff deal with hundreds and probably over 1,000 patients daily. They're the ones on the front line, they're the ones at most risk, and they're the ones who deserve the most support. So that's why I wanted to rally the island and neighboring communities."

"The Newport Police

Department agreed without hesitation to participate and show our thanks to the healthcare staff for putting themselves on the front line in order to keep everyone safe and healthy during these difficult times," Newport Police Lt. April Amaral said in an email to The Daily News.

The police and fire departments met at the site of the former Newport Grand casino before making their way to the hospital. The Daily News caught up with two police officers as they waited in the parking lot for their comrades to arrive.

"Just to show our appreciation," Middletown police Lt. Joanne Alboum said as her reasoning for participation in the procession.

"People are doing things that they don't normally have to do," Tiverton police Lt. Bryan Palagi said. "Takes a lot of extra work and effort."

"They're doing a great job," Newport Fire Department Chief Brian Dugan said of hospital staff during a phone call with The Daily News on Monday. "They should receive recognition."

"I thought it was very nice [that they] took time out of their day," said Kara Toner, a nurse assistant at the hospital who watched the procession.

"It was amazing," said Kelly Rosario, a nurse assistant. "They're busy themselves."

"I thought it was great," said Dr. Neima Hadi.

"Such a wonderful tribute," said Orla Brandos, chief nursing officer. She said it was heartwarming "to know that we have these community partners." Brandos got emotional when she spoke of the hard work of her staff. "To lead a team like this is just a privilege and an honor."