

County chiefs, sheriff recognize service by officers, community

By Amy Smith Union staff writer | Posted: Friday, January 16, 2015 9:37 am

WATERTOWN — The Jefferson County Chiefs & Sheriff Association on Thursday honored several individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty during the past year.

Kicking off the association's annual dinner at Watertown's Turner Hall, Watertown Police Chief Timothy Roets welcomed those in attendance, taking time to recognize new police chiefs Adrian Bump of the Fort Atkinson Police Department and Kenneth Pileggi of the Jefferson Police Department.

Accepting the first award of the evening, Officers Brandon Sachse and Robert Strandt of the Fort Atkinson Police Department were recognized as the 2014 Law Enforcement Officers of the Year. The pair was nominated by Fort Atkinson Police Lt. Chad Lange for their courage, bravery and excellent decisionmaking during a standoff.

On July 21, 2014, at approximately 5:13 p.m., the two officers were dispatched to a disturbance involving an intoxicated woman who later pointed a high-powered rifle at the officers and barricaded herself inside the residence for several hours in a standoff.

The woman's son originally called the police, reporting that his mother was intoxicated and trying to start a fight at the residence. When the officers arrived, they made contact with the son, the father and the intoxicated woman. At this time, it was determined no arrests would be made, and the female was warned about her behavior.

The son also agreed to leave the residence to avoid anymore problems, and the husband was advised to call the police if his wife continued to cause problems.

At 7:06 p.m., the officers returned to the residence as the husband had called police, stating his wife had become violent. He said that she was ramming herself into him and had grabbed the family dog by the collar, twisted the collar and threw the dog into another room.

When the officers arrived, they spoke with the husband and determined that, at minimum they were going to arrest the woman for domestic-related disorderly conduct.

Officer Sachse and Strandt entered the two-story residence and were unable to locate the woman on the first floor. They heard noises coming from upstairs and determined she was on the second floor.

Officer Strandt went to the stairwell and had contact with the woman, who refused to cooperate or come



AWARDS NIGHT

AWARDS NIGHT — The Jefferson County Chiefs & Sheriff Association on Thursday honored several individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty during the past year. For more photos, click [here](#). — Daily Jefferson County Union photos by Amy Smith.

downstairs. As he was going up the stairs to talk to her, the female started to kick him, telling him she did not want him to come up.

Officer Strandt eventually convinced the woman to come partially down the stairs, where she sat down and they started to communicate about the disturbance. The conversation did not go well, and at one point, he told the female she was under arrest for disorderly conduct. In response, she quickly stood up and retreated toward the top of the stairs.

Officer Strandt followed the woman up the stairs with Officer Sachse behind him. When they reached the top of the stairs, the woman reached around a corner, where she had sitting a Remington 700 high powered rifle with a scope.

The officers were halfway up the stairs when the woman raised the rifle into shooting position and pointed it down the stairs at the officers.

Officer Strandt unholstered his duty weapon while simultaneously retreating down the steps. He gave her several verbal commands to lower her weapon, and the woman responded by yelling for Officer Strandt to drop his gun.

At the bottom of the stairs, both Officer Strandt and Officer Sachse were able to take positions of cover while continuing to give commands to drop the gun.

Following several attempts to convince the woman to drop the gun, Officer Sachse left the residence and retrieved a less lethal beanbag shotgun. After several more unsuccessful attempts, the officers updated dispatch and requested mutual aid from the shift supervisor, who was in municipal court.

The officers maintained the scene until shift supervisor Lt. Chad Lange arrived with deputies from the Jefferson County Sheriffs Office. Eventually, the decision was made to request the sheriff's office SWAT team to assist.

As the officers were exiting the residence to set up an outside perimeter, the sound of a gun discharging was heard from the second floor. While waiting for the SWAT team to arrive, the officers maintained an outside perimeter of the house and also made contact with immediate neighbors, evacuating them from their residencies. SWAT arrived, as did several negotiators who tried multiple techniques to get the woman to leave the residence. Negotiations continued for several hours and at 12:57 a.m., the woman agreed to come down the stairs, where the SWAT team was waiting to take her into custody.

Once the woman was removed from the home, officers found the rifle and a single shot 20-gauge shotgun and a 12-gauge semi-automatic shotgun on the floor next to the rifle. Several rounds of different ammunition also were found scattered about the floor and bed.

The woman had tried to load the rifle with a shotgun shell, which was jammed into the chamber. It also was found that while barricaded, the woman accidentally discharged a round from the 20-gauge shotgun into the bedroom wall.

“Clearly, this is not a call that any officer wants to get dispatched to,” Lange wrote in his nomination. “Sadly, we know that all too often officers are killed on these type of calls. It was a high-stress call where quick decisions had to be made.”

Lange said the officers could easily have engaged the woman and used deadly force based on the circumstances.

“Officer Strandt and Officer Sachse quickly assessed the situation but did not overreact,” he added. “Instead, they courageously sacrificed their own safety while retreating to a position of relative safety without engaging the suspect.”

Also Thursday, Jefferson County Sheriff Paul Milbrath presented the 2014 Citizen of the Year award to Gabriel Mackenzie.

Mackenzie was nominated by the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office for his quick thinking, heroic actions and ability to put his own life in danger in order to ensure the safety and well-being of others.

“It is truly a remarkable and noble act,” Jefferson County Chief Deputy Jeffrey Parker wrote. “Gabe’s actions on May 10th, 2014, likely saved the lives of three people. This act of bravery can’t be understated for what it means to these men and their families.”

On May 10 at approximately 4:18 p.m., the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office received a 911 call regarding a house fire located at W1988 Bente Road. The caller stated that the house was fully engulfed in flames. A three-alarm fire was declared with more than 12 fire companies and EMS dispatched to the incident location.

Upon arrival by sheriff’s deputies, the house was found to be totally engulfed in flames; fire personnel were on scene and eventually, the house would be declared a total loss.

As one of the responding deputies, Bill Dandoy, began to check on the well-being of those on the scene, it became clear that several people were in the house when the fire started and might not have survived if it were not for the heroics of a few.

Deputy Dandoy was approached by Gabriel (Gabe) Mackenzie Jr., who said that he and his sister, Alexandra Mackenzie-Kutka, were driving east on Bente Road heading home. As they passed by W1988 Bente Road, he noticed there were some garbage bags that appeared to be on fire close to the residence and a parked vehicle. He turned around in the next available driveway and headed back toward the residence.

About 45 seconds had elapsed since he first observed the fire. When Mackenzie pulled into the driveway of the residence, the fire had spread to the house and the vehicle. Mackenzie and Mackenzie-Kutka ran around the residence, yelling for people to get out of the house. Two men heard their yelling and exited the home, but another man was stuck on a third-floor balcony.

Mackenzie ran to the barn next to the residence and located a ladder, which he used to assist in getting Daniel Davis off of the third-floor balcony. Davis was removed without any type of injury.

Mackenzie asked Davis if anyone else was in the house and Davis could not answer him at that time. Mackenzie next went to the basement door and kicked it in. He described himself as “low crawling” up to the second floor. During this time, he was yelling to see if anyone else was inside the residence. When no one answered, he “quickly” retreated as the fire was rapidly spreading.

Also Thursday, Waterloo Fire Chief Vern Butzine accepted the association’s President’s Award.

“Vern’s dedication and commitment to the community truly distinguishes himself as a professional in both his

personal life and service to the community,” Lt. Randi Lange, of the Waterloo Police Department, said in presenting the award.

Butzine has been a member of the department since 1981 and the acting chief since 2007. Lange discussed several incidents in which Butzine’s quick thinking helped save lives and significant damage.

In one, on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2014, Butzine and his wife, Raynele, were shopping at Piggly Wiggly in Waterloo when someone reported a man that had fainted.

“Vern did not think twice,” Lange said. “He ran down the aisle and located a male unresponsive on the floor and not breathing.”

Lange wrote in his nomination that Butzine administered CPR while his wife dialed 911.

“If it were not for Vern and Raynelle Butzine and their quick and decisive actions, he would not be with us today,” Lange said of the man.

Also noted was an instance in which Butzine spotted a glow from a home on his way home from dinner. Upon arrival, he realized the glow was, in fact, flames inside the residence.

Butzine immediately called 911 and upon the fire department’s arrival, made the decision to toss the “bomb,” which is designed to take the oxygen out of the area and extinguish the fire.

“The bomb worked, leaving a few hotspots that were extinguished upon arrival of responding fire departments,” Lange wrote. “The extent of damage to the building and structure is minimal compared to what could have been.

“During the course of Vern’s career, he has been able to substantially help to reduce property loss and save lives,” Lange wrote.

Recognized Thursday as Support Person of the Year was Brian Nesthus, supervisor of the Jefferson County Office Jail kitchen.

Nesthus was nominated by Sheriff Milbrath for taking the sheriff office food services to the next level.

Presenting the award was Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office Chief Deputy Jeff Parker, who said that “every agency represented here would be mistaken not to recognize those people who do not wear the badge and gun.”

Nesthus, an employee of the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office since 1995, and his staff are paramount in the overall operations, from the Jail Division, as well as augmenting the sheriff’s office under special circumstances, Parker said.

On average, the kitchen produces more than 180,000 meals for jail inmates at a cost of about 75 cents per meal. Another 493 meals are prepared for outside agency training, preparing meals for the men and women of law enforcement who are involved in in-service and other specialized training.

“For many years, Brian has established positive community relationships with a variety of nonprofit organizations, as well as vendors, businesses and farmers who have donated large quantities of food to the jail kitchen,” Parker said.

In 2012, more than \$71,000 in food product was donated to the jail and placed back onto the inmates’ plates.

“That is a huge cost saving to both the sheriff’s office, as well as taxpayers of Jefferson County,” Parker added.

The Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office is also one of the only jails in Wisconsin to be licensed under the state’s Department of Health food service operations, which allows it to prepare food for outside functions such as jury trials, county board meetings and other county events, Parker noted.

In addition, Nesthus has received the Health Department award for excellence in food service sanitation from 2008-13.

“Since Brian has taken over the kitchen, the jail has not received anything but outstanding reviews and inspections from both the state and jail health inspector,” Parker said.

He said that going the extra step, Nesthus has looked at innovative cost managing strategies that have saved the county thousands of dollars.

Accepting the association’s Community Excellence Award were Andy and Ryan Tessman of Emergency Starting and Towing.

Watertown Chief of Police Timothy Roets nominated the pair, whose business has been serving the community since 1974.

“The business provides first-rate professional 24-hour towing service,” Roets said. “What is truly extraordinary about Andy and Ryan Tessman is what they give back to the Watertown community.”

Andy Tessman serves as the parade chairman for both the Fourth of July and Christmas parades, and both brothers support the city’s annual lights and sirens event in which police, fire and emergency responders from a two-county area meet in Riverside Park with their equipment and vehicles.

The Tessman brothers also donate bikes to Watertown’s annual bike rodeo, support and participate in the Watertown Police Department’s Citizen Police Academy and assist with the Run from the Cops 5k event.

“They are both tremendously generous and humble men whose actions speak louder than words,” Roets added.

Receiving the Crisis Intervention Techniques Officer of the Year award were Officers Kathy Riedl and Michael Hoyt, of the Watertown Police Department.

Rounding out the evening, several individuals were honored with the Crisis Intervention Techniques Jail Officers Award. Those include the following staff from the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office: Sgt. Heather Novotny, Nurse Diane Lenz, Deputies Patrick Farley, Kevin Kellogg, William Dandoy, Jay Leonard, Alison Walker, Steve Ganser, Chad Roberts, and Dan McGonagil.

The award was presented by Jefferson County Human Services director Kathy Cauley.