

OFFICER PAUL CARPENTER



The Lifesaving Award is given to department personnel who, by their immediate actions, have saved a human life under unusual and/or extraordinary circumstances.



On May 13, 2009 at 1211 hours, Officer Holton Widhalm and Officer Paul Carpenter responded to a suicidal call on the Monroe Street Bridge. The officers arrived on scene to find a woman near the middle of the bridge with her feet extending over the edge. At this height and location, if the woman were to fall, her death would have been an absolute certainty.

Officer Widhalm made first contact with her and attempted to initiate dialog. She was not cooperative and refused to climb off the railing. Officer Widhalm found her speech particularly disturbing based upon her calm, almost “flat” demeanor. He was immediately concerned that she had already, definitely, made up her mind to jump. While speaking with her, Officer Paul Carpenter came up behind her concealing himself around the corner of the pillar.

Officer Widhalm determined that an attempt to pull her from the railing was immediately necessary and their best chance of saving the woman’s life. He decided at one point, when she shifted her weight toward him, that it was the best time to make the attempt. With hand signals, he motioned to Officer Carpenter that he intended to grab her and gave Carpenter a “3” count. On three the officers simultaneously grabbed the woman and in one motion took her to the sidewalk unharmed. The woman was transported to Sacred Heart for help and evaluation following her rescue. There is no doubt that had it not been for their professionalism, courage and quick thinking intervention, the woman would have jumped.

On August 3rd, Officer Widhalm and Officer Carpenter received the Lifesaving Bar, which will be worn on their uniforms. They will also be given the Lifesaving Medal at our annual Employee Awards Ceremony, in February 2010.

