



Sheriff Curtis N. Fell  
**ROCK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
 Craig L. Strouse, Chief Deputy



Jude G. Maurer  
 Commander, Law Enforcement Services

*"A Tradition of Service"*

Erik D. Chellevoid  
 Commander, Correctional Services

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Sheriff Fell Announces 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Ceremony**

**For Immediate Release**

Date: April 18, 2023

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Sheriff Fell is pleased to announce that the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Rock County Sheriff's Office Awards Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at the Dr. Daniel Hale Williams Resource Center in the Beckman Mill Room, located at 1717 Center Avenue, Janesville, WI 53546. This event is open to the public. All are welcome to attend.

This ceremony recognizes Sheriff's Office staff and community members for outstanding public safety achievements that occurred in 2022. Below is an overview of the 2022 Awards.

**Deputy of the Year: Deputy Kyle Kunkel**

Kyle Kunkel started at the Rock County Sheriff's Office on February 18, 2018, as a Correctional Officer. He became a Deputy Sheriff on February 24, 2020. He graduated from a 720-hour Law Enforcement Academy at Blackhawk Technical College on July 17, 2020. Deputy Kunkel currently works second shift in the Patrol Bureau. He serves on the Domestic Violence Intervention (DVI) Team, Honor Guard, and SWAT Team. Deputy Kunkel is the primary decoy for the K9 Team and has taken countless bites. He recently completed training to become a Police Training Officer (PTO). Deputy Kunkel is certified as a General Jail Instructor through the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board. He is also a part-time Police Officer for the Town of Milton Police Department. Deputy Kunkel is a Milton native who resides in Janesville with his fiancé. He graduated from Milton High School and earned an Associate of Applied Science in Recording & Music Technology from Madison Media Institute.



Deputy Kunkel's supervisors selected him for this recognition for his exceptional performance on patrol. His supervisors cited several instances where he received positive feedback from community partners and citizens for his handling of calls for service. They noted that he proactively works cases and sees them through. Deputy Kunkel regularly attends specialized training to expand his expertise. His supervisors recently recommended him to be a PTO due to his effectiveness on patrol. In addition to his day-to-day patrol duties, Deputy Kunkel serves on four specialty teams: DVI, Honor Guard, SWAT, and K9 (Decoy). These roles require commitments outside of his regular hours, including community engagements, which Deputy Kunkel works without hesitation. Deputy Kunkel is a standout deputy of solid character.



**Correctional Officer of the Year: Correctional Officer Joey LaGrange**



Joey LaGrange began employment at the Rock County Sheriff's Office on January 11, 2010, as a Correctional Officer. He completed a 160-hour Jail Academy at Blackhawk Technical College on March 19, 2010. He currently works second shift in the Jail Operations Bureau and is frequently utilized as a Booking Officer. Correctional Officer LaGrange serves on the Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT). He is an experienced Jail Training Officer (JTO), having trained fellow officers since December 2015. Correctional Officer LaGrange resides in Janesville with his wife. He graduated from Beloit Memorial High School and obtained an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Blackhawk Technical College.

Correctional Officer LaGrange received this award for his consistently outstanding performance throughout his 13-year tenure. His direct supervisor described him as an "exceptional employee" and praised his strong work ethic. Correctional Officer LaGrange maintains a positive attitude and calm demeanor. He is very knowledgeable on jail operations and can work any assignment. Correctional Officer LaGrange is a leader on his shift. He is approachable, easy to communicate with, and very patient, making him a go-to resource for other officers. Correctional Officer LaGrange is dependable and conscientious with remarkable attendance, very minimal sick time use, and willingness to volunteer for overtime when needed. Correctional Officer LaGrange is a reliable, productive jail officer, who embodies our agency's tradition of service.

**Support Staff of the Year: Administrative Assistant Christopher Johnson**

Christopher Johnson started at the Rock County Sheriff's Office on February 24, 2020, as a Correctional Officer. He accepted an Administrative Assistant position, formerly known as the Optical Imaging Specialist, on April 26, 2021. His primary responsibility is scanning vital records for the agency. He works first shift in the Jail. He also serves on the Building Project Committee and the Uniform Committee. He graduated from Fox Valley Technical College with an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Forensic Science. He completed a 160-hour Jail Academy at the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office Training Academy on February 12, 2016. He resides in Machesney Park, IL with his wife.



Captain Kimberly Litsheim nominated Johnson for this award for his exceptional efforts in digitizing a massive number of written records, which enabled the reduction of records storage space in the ongoing building project. Johnson utilized his prior experience as a jail officer with both the Rock County Sheriff's Office and the Waukesha County Sheriff's Office to improve current methods, paperwork, and procedures within the Jail. Johnson's supervisors have received numerous compliments regarding his work. Captain Litsheim emphasized Johnson's daily involvement on the building project and highlighted his motivation and initiative.

**Retired Sheriffs Leadership Award: Commander Jude Maurer**



Jude Maurer began his career at the Rock County Sheriff's Office on May 1, 1995, as a Deputy Sheriff. He served as a Field Training Officer. He progressed through the ranks to Sergeant in July 2000, Lieutenant in June 2008, and Captain in December 2009. He promoted to Commander on October 27, 2019. He currently leads the Law Enforcement Services Division. He will promote to Chief Deputy this year upon Chief Deputy Craig Strouse's retirement. He earned a Master's Degree in Management from Cardinal Stritch University, a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Upper Iowa University, and an Associate Degree in Police Science from Madison College. He graduated from Northwestern University's prestigious School of Police Staff and Command. He served in the Wisconsin Army National Guard from 1990 - 1996. He resides in Janesville with his wife. They have three adult sons.

Commander Maurer received this award for his leadership on the Command Staff over the last 15 years. He served as the Patrol Bureau Captain for many years before becoming the Law Enforcement Services Commander. His expertise on patrol functions is invaluable. Chief Deputy Strouse nominated Commander Maurer for his knowledge, dedication, commitment, and integrity. He described Commander Maurer as a role model for other leaders.

**Lifesaving Awards:**

**Deputies Riley Bendorf and Kalyn Collins, Correctional Officers Daniel Banks, Jordan Hillis, and Corey Schilt, and Nurses Emalene Hanewold and Taylor McNeff**

On April 8, 2022, at approximately 8:50 a.m., then Correctional Officer Kalyn Collins radioed for personnel to respond to C-4 for a possible overdose. Several Correctional Officers and Nurses responded with Narcan, oxygen, and an AED. Then Correctional Officer Riley Bendorf and Correctional Officer Collins were the first to arrive and found a male inmate unresponsive from an overdose. Correctional Officer Bendorf immediately started chest compressions. Correctional Officer Collins ordered the rest of the inmates in the section to lock in their cells, making the scene secure. Correctional Officer Daniel Banks, Correctional Officer Jordan Hillis, Correctional Officer Corey Schilt, Nurse Emalene Hanewold, and Nurse Taylor McNeff arrived to assist. Correctional Officer Hillis and Correctional Officer Schilt administered doses of Narcan. Correctional Officer Collins relieved Correctional Officer Bendorf on chest compressions. Nurse Hanewold prepared the AED and oxygen and passed them to Nurse McNeff to apply to the patient. The AED advised no shock. Correctional Officer Banks performed chest compressions, while Nurse McNeff continued to administer Narcan. Shortly after Correctional Officer Banks took over chest compressions, the patient became responsive. Personnel continued to monitor and care for the patient until EMS arrived. The Correctional Officers and Nurses involved in this incident each contributed to saving the inmate's life.

### Deputies Christopher Hasseler and Jason Laufenberg

On May 12, 2022, at approximately 6:55 a.m., Deputy Christopher Hasseler and Deputy Jason Laufenberg responded to an address in Rockvale Mobile Home Park for a Fire Assist call. Dispatch advised that a 33-year-old female at the residence was unresponsive and not breathing. Both Deputies responded from the South Station at Blackhawk Technical College, so they arrived quickly. Upon arrival, they entered the residence and started lifesaving measures. Deputy Hasseler verified that the female did not have a pulse and was not breathing and began chest compressions. Deputy Laufenberg readied an AED and administered one shock. Deputy Hasseler and Deputy Laufenberg continued compressions until relieved by EMS personnel. The female began to stabilize, and EMS personnel transported her to the hospital. Medical staff at the Emergency Room stabilized the female and provided a very positive prognosis. The lifesaving measures taken by Deputy Hasseler and Deputy Laufenberg saved this woman.

### Deputy Kyle Hathorn

On November 17, 2022, at approximately 4:55 p.m., Deputy Kyle Hathorn was at a runoff in the median on East U.S. Highway 14 just west of Neville Road. He was standing at the door of the runoff talking with a female inside the vehicle when he turned and saw a male walking across the eastbound lanes of East U.S. Highway 14. It was later determined that the male thought the runoff vehicle belonged to his daughter. While walking, the male slipped and fell backwards. He struck his head on the concrete rendering himself semi-unconscious and unable to move. Deputy Hathorn observed a vehicle heading right toward the downed male. The vehicle was braking, but due to ice, continued toward the male lying in the road. Deputy Hathorn immediately ran to the male, grabbed his legs, and pulled him into the median to safety. As this occurred, the vehicle grazed the man's head with its bumper and drove over the spot where the male had laid. Deputy Hathorn's squad and body cameras captured the entire incident. Without Deputy Hathorn's quick and decisive action, the vehicle would have run over the male and caused life threatening injuries.

### ***Sheriff's Award:*** Deputy Kurt Berberich

Deputy Kurt Berberich spearheaded the implementation of trauma response kits for Sheriff's Office squads. Each trauma response kit contains lifesaving medical supplies for use in emergency situations. Items include, but are not limited to Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT), chest seals, QuickClot hemostatic gauze, emergency trauma dressing, wound packing gauze, elastic wrap bandage, gauze bandage, surgical tape, gauze pads, survival blanket, trauma shears, gloves, alcohol prep pads, and Band-Aids. Outfitted squads include those assigned to the Patrol Bureau, Civil Process Bureau, Detective Bureau, Recreational Safety Bureau, and Command Staff. Trauma response kits are also issued throughout the Rock County Jail. Deputy Berberich selected the first aid items to include in each trauma response kit and assembled the trauma response kits. He drew on the knowledge that he gained from his military combat experience and successful completion of a 24-hour FLETC Basic Tactical Medical Instructor Course in July 2021. He provided medical training to staff during Fall 2021 In-Service Training. Deputy Berberich keeps medical supplies on hand and restocks the kits as needed.

## ***Commendations:***

### **Deputy Preston McIntosh**

Deputy Preston McIntosh's commitment to Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) enforcement has significantly contributed to the protection of life and property due to the dangers posed by intoxicated driving, which is often a major contributing factor of many injurious traffic crashes. Deputy McIntosh completed 33 OWI arrests in 2022. This was the largest number of OWI arrests for any Deputy agencywide. His arrests made up approximately 27.9% of OWI arrests for third shift Deputies and 14.7% of OWI arrests for all Deputies. Comparatively, the remaining third shift Deputies averaged approximately 7 OWI arrests. Deputy McIntosh undoubtedly prevented multiple situations from escalating in dangerousness by locating and apprehending intoxicated drivers before they caused significant property loss, major injury, or even death(s). Deputy McIntosh also completed 579 traffic contacts in 2022, which was the most for any third shift Deputy. He issued 282 citations and 198 written warnings. Deputy McIntosh's self-initiated field activity in 2022 was notably impressive and impactful upon public safety within Rock County.

### **Courtney Stewart, LPC**

Qualified Mental Health Professional Courtney Stewart, LPC is an employee of Advanced Correctional Healthcare, who has worked in the Rock County Jail since June 2016. Stewart has expanded the mental health services available to inmates. Stewart meets face-to-face with inmates (1,788 in 2019, 1,455 in 2020, 1,640 in 2021, and 1,926 in 2022). She uses her expertise to recognize when inmates are experiencing mental health related issues and illnesses, so they can obtain treatment. Stewart takes a proactive approach with high-risk inmates and often prevents problems before they arise. Stewart works closely with the Rock County Crisis Intervention Unit on plans for mentally ill and suicidal inmates. Stewart created a Special Needs Unit for housing inmates who cannot be in the general population due to their charges or other conflicts. Stewart leads the Houses of Healing Program which equips inmates with greater self-awareness. She also instructs Sheriff's Office staff in Officer Wellness and Suicide Prevention during In-Service Training. She revamped the Suicide Prevention Form and the Jail Mental Health Form for new intakes.

## ***Citizen Awards:***

### **Merlin Mast**

On June 23, 2022, at approximately 3:53 p.m., Deputies were responding in emergency mode to a call involving a gunshot victim in the Town of Beloit. While en route, a Deputy was involved in a serious vehicle crash at the intersection of South County Highway G and East Beloit - Rock Townline Road. The Deputy was trapped inside the squad with serious injuries. The squad's engine caught on fire, and vehicle fires tend to spread fast. Merlin Mast was in his work truck stopped at this intersection and witnessed the crash. Mast quickly retrieved the fire extinguisher from his work truck and extinguished the fire before it spread to the passenger compartment of the squad. There were no other emergency responders or vehicles at the scene at this time. Once emergency responders arrived, it took a while to extricate the Deputy from the squad. EMS

transported the Deputy to a hospital. The Deputy made a full recovery and recently returned to duty. Mast's heroic actions very likely saved the Deputy's life.

#### Jennifer Burner and Krista Twist

On the afternoon of July 30, 2022, Jennifer Burner and Krista Twist were driving on Afton Road near the Village of Afton when they observed two small children walking along the shoulder of Afton Road unattended. Burner stopped and contacted the small children who stated their "Daddy" was at home, was sleeping, and would not wake up. The children, ages 5 and 3, entered Burner's vehicle and went to a nearby business parking lot away from traffic on the busy road. Twist observed what had occurred and followed Burner to the parking lot and called 911. Deputies arrived and both women were instrumental in obtaining fractured information from the children. Burner and Twist were able to keep the scared children calm while gathering details that led to Deputies locating their residence. At the residence, Deputies found that the children's father had a seizure in the yard. The father was unaware of the actions his children took to get him help. As EMS personnel assessed the father, he went into another seizure. The father was transported to a hospital for treatment. A family member responded to the parking lot and took custody of the children until their father was well. Due to the quick thinking, compassion, and patience of Burner and Twist, two children and their father have a future together.

#### Brian Craker, Donald Frey, Brian Romack, Mark Simmons, and Joseph Sobkowicz

On December 7, 2022, at approximately 12:00 p.m., a two-person work crew was conducting a remodel job on a residence in Milton Township when a concrete slab with an estimated weight of 2,000 pounds shifted and landed on top of one of the workers at the bottom of a 9-foot hole. The other worker, Joseph Sobkowicz, knew that he could not remove the concrete on his own. He yelled for help and dialed 911 to summon emergency responders. An unassociated construction crew working three houses down heard the plea for help. Brian Craker, Donald Frey, Brian Romack, and Mark Simmons hastily responded and assessed the situation. They initially attempted to remove the concrete by hand, but due to the extreme weight and confined space, they could not move it enough to remove the critically injured victim. One of the men obtained a logging chain from their worksite, another entered the nearby mini excavator, and the other two assessed the best way to free the victim. Working together, the construction crew was able to free the victim and bring him out of the hole. Once on the muddy surface, the men recognized that the victim was not breathing and began CPR. As emergency responders arrived on scene, the victim had regained a pulse and started receiving advanced medical care. After a stay in the hospital, the victim was on his way to a full recovery.

#### Niles Boeche, Paul Cunningham, and Dale Granlund

On January 29, 2023, at approximately 2:45 p.m., Deputies were dispatched to a possible overdose near an address on South River Road in the Town of Rock. While en route, Deputies were informed that citizens on scene observed an unresponsive person inside a vehicle slumped over the steering wheel. The citizens broke a window to enter the vehicle and check on the driver. The citizens determined that the driver had a faint pulse and started CPR. Paul Cunningham stopped to check on the driver who he believed was in distress and flagged down Dale Granlund to call 911 and request first responders. Niles Boeche, a retired Rock County Sheriff's Office

Deputy, was nearby, and his children alerted him to the medical emergency. Boeche broke the window and gained access to the driver. Boeche and Cunningham got the driver out of the vehicle and performed CPR until Fire and EMS personnel arrived. As a result of the swift response and compassion of Cunningham, Granlund, and Boeche, the driver survived.

#### Patricia Copeland

On March 16, 2023, an adult female went into Walgreens Store #4055, located at 1717 Milton Avenue in Janesville, to purchase \$2,500 worth of American Express gift cards. Staff notified the manager of the unusually large gift card purchase. Manager Patricia Copeland immediately recognized the signs of a scam. The female was being scammed via Facebook Messenger by person(s) posing as a family member and a government agent. Copeland has seen and stopped scam attempts in the past. Copeland showed the female the Rock County Sheriff's Office's Fraud Prevention Card and educated her on gift card scams. Copeland successfully stopped the fraud, preventing the female from a loss of \$2,500.

Congratulations to these recipients for their contributions to public safety!

CURTIS N. FELL  
SHERIFF

By: Nicole Barrington