

MEDIA ADVISORY | May 16, 2023

NDHP to Present Officers and NDDOT Employees with Colonel's Award for Excellence

NARRATIVE: On Tuesday, May 23, the North Dakota Highway Patrol will hold a ceremony to recognize NDHP **Sgt. Matt Denault**; NDHP **Trooper Gabe Irvis**; and NDDOT employees **Ryan Jamieson**; **Willie Walski**; **Scott Kaufman**; **Tygr Palmer**; and **Jake Morton** for their efforts in an incident that occurred last fall near Casselton.

On November 23, 2022, NDDOT Fargo District employees were repairing the cable median barrier along westbound I-94 near mile marker 334 in Cass County, about three miles east of Casselton. The NDDOT employees had placed advanced warning signs along westbound I-94 prior to the lane closure for the repair work. A plow truck with an impact attenuator was placed at the location of the repair. This plow truck had a large digital arrow board on top of it, directing traffic to merge right. In front of the plow truck was a NDDOT pickup with a large digital arrow board directing traffic to merge right. A third NDDOT pickup was on scene as well. All vehicles were blocking the left lane of westbound I-94 to allow for the repair work to be completed in the median.

Shortly after 1:00 pm, a motorist driving a Cadillac Escalade approached the lane closure, traveling in the left lane of westbound I-94 at approximately 75 mph, the driver did not adhere to the advanced warning signs and failed to merge right and struck the impact attenuator, causing the driver of the Cadillac to lose control. The Cadillac began a spin on the roadway and spun into the first NDDOT pickup truck that was in front of the plow truck.

Five NDDOT employees were working in the median when the crash occurred; four were able to jump out of the way. Ryan Jamieson was unable to avoid being struck and was pinned against the cable median barrier. Ryan's left leg was pinned between the bumper of the Cadillac and the cable barrier, causing a severe leg injury, and rendering him unable to move.

The NDDOT employees immediately sprang into action. Ryan told the others to use a chop saw to cut the cable; he remained calm during the ordeal. Jake Morton called 911 to report the incident. Tygr Palmer and Willie Walski worked on trying to use a chop saw to cut the cable and a plow truck to push the cable to release the tension. The chop saw wouldn't start, and the plow truck was unable to be moved because of the crash. Scott Kaufman then used the other NDDOT pickup and drove it into the median, using the bumper to push on the cable barrier which released enough tension to move Ryan; they then carried him to the pickup. The other employees continued to talk to dispatch who directed them to keep Ryan alert and conscious, until care was turned over to law enforcement and emergency responders.

Trooper Gabriel Irvis and Sergeant Matthew Denault were the first emergency responders on scene. They located Ryan in the NDDOT pickup and began to treat him by wrapping his leg in gauze to stem the bleeding and to keep him awake and talking. Due to the severity of the injury, the gauze was not sufficient; they then applied a tourniquet to stem the bleeding. Trooper Irvis and Sgt. Denault remained with Ryan, monitoring his condition and the tourniquet until the Casselton Ambulance and EMS personnel arrived.

Ryan was transported to Sanford Hospital, where he received treatment for his leg injuries, to include numerous surgeries since then. ER staff and Casselton Ambulance crew members credited the actions by all involved for saving Ryan's life.

The recognition ceremony will take place at the NDDOT Fargo District Office, 503 38th Street South at 9:00 am.

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