

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 12, 2023

### **NDHP & NDPOA Award Ceremony – May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

On Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) and North Dakota Peace Officers Association (NDPOA) conducted an awards ceremony in the City Commission Chambers at Fargo City Hall in Fargo, ND. In attendance were members of the NDHP NDPOA, and Fargo Police Department. The following individuals received the NDHP Colonel's Award for Excellence and NDPOA Lifesaving Award for actions they took on August 29<sup>th</sup> along I-29 in Cass County. The individuals were:

- Sergeant Andrew Cashin – ND Highway Patrol
- Officer Joshua Persson – Fargo Police Department

Sergeant Cashin and Officer Persson were presented the Colonel's Award for Excellence and the Lifesaving Award for the following actions:

- On the evening of August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at approximately 6:00 pm, NDHP Troopers and Fargo PD Officers were dispatched to a call of a female that was running through traffic and jumping over barriers on I-29 at the 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South overpass in Fargo. Callers were concerned the female would be struck by a vehicle. Several additional calls came in about the same female, with the final calls relaying the female was sitting on the top of the concrete guardrail threatening to jump from the northbound I-29 overpass onto 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South below, a fall of approximately 30 feet.

Several Fargo PD Officers and NDHP Troopers responded and closed off both the east and westbound lanes of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in Fargo. NDHP Sergeant Cashin and Fargo PD Officer Persson responded to the I-29 overpass and began to speak to the female. Concerned citizens were on scene as well, helping control traffic.

Officer Persson arrived first and Sergeant Cashin a short time later. Both officers engaged with the distraught and suicidal female. They both showed compassion, empathy, and a desire to help her. They explained who they were, and they were there to help. At one point, Officer Persson squatted down below the female, so she could see him better. The female was straddling the concrete guardrail and could have fallen over the top at any point.

They kept her engaged and talking, focusing her attention on them instead of what she was intending to do. They asked her to take their hand so they could help her down, explained resources available to help her and made a personal connection with her. Eventually, they were able to help the female off the guardrail.

Officer Persson and Sergeant Cashin, who have not worked together before, worked well as a team. They were listening to her, responding to her needs and eventually were able to help her off the ledge. An ambulance was on scene, but after the incident she felt more comfortable being transported for care by the officers, instead of EMS staff. This speaks volumes for the rapport that was built with her during this crisis.

Both officers showed empathy for a fellow human being in crisis. Their compassion and understanding of her needs only helped this incident have the conclusion it did. They worked together, using common sense and training to talk to his person and convince them their life was worth living. Without their actions, this incident could have had a different outcome. I believe they saved her life on this day.

The NDHP Colonel's Award of Excellence is awarded by the NDHP Superintendent to NDHP employees and citizens for actions that have benefited the NDHP and State of North Dakota.

The NDPOA Lifesaving Award is awarded by the ND Peace Officer's Association to first responders and citizens for actions that significantly contributes to the saving of a human life.

Below is a picture of Sergeant Andrew Cashin and Officer Joshua Persson.



Photo: Sergeant Andrew Cashin, Officer Joshua Persson

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**For More Information Contact:**

**Captain Bryan Niewind** 701-320-1309  
bniewind@nd.gov