



# Saint Louis County

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**Ross Litman**  
Sheriff

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **St. Louis County Sheriff honors two groups with 911 Lifesaver Awards**

Two separate car accidents came close to resulting in fatalities – in both cases the vehicles started on fire with occupants trapped inside. But thanks to heroic passersby who stopped to help, and the coordinated effort of emergency responders, no lives were lost.

St. Louis County Sheriff Ross Litman will recognize the many individuals involved in these two rescue efforts, presenting them with 911 Life Saver Awards during the County Board meeting on Tuesday, May 26, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Hibbing City Hall, 401 East 21<sup>st</sup> Street in Hibbing.

In one incident, which happened in May 2014, a vehicle went off U.S Highway 169, rolled on its roof and caught fire. Bill Glad, along with sons Gary and Timothy Glad, and a friend, Nicholas Bigo came upon the scene, called 9-1-1 and stopped to help. They had to smash a window to get to the driver, and when they did they discovered his legs were tangled in the melting steering column. They ultimately cut through the deployed air bag and seatbelt to free the man. Meanwhile, 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Specialists answered the calls and dispatched the Breitung Fire Department, Sheriff's deputies, Life Link III and Tower Ambulance, all of whom provided medical care to the victim, who was ultimately flown to a Duluth hospital.

In the second incident, which happened last August, a two car accident at the intersection of Admiral Road and Iron Junction Road on the Iron Range left a car upside down in the ditch and a truck tipped on its side. Richard and Rachel Price happened upon on the scene while taking a motorcycle ride. They spotted a little girl crawling out of the car and ran to her, then called 9-1-1. While Rachel stayed with the girl and provided updates to 9-1-1, Richard attempted to rescue the couple trapped in the overturned car. As he worked to unbuckle one of the occupants, he heard a fuel

line sizzling and then an explosion. He pulled the female out and carried her from the now burning car, then returned and crawled inside to see if anyone else was still trapped. The flames forced him out just moments before the vehicle exploded, starting a grass fire. During all of this, 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Specialists dispatched the Clinton Fire Department and First Responders, St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputies, a Minnesota State Patrol Officer, Mt. Iron Fire Department, Virginia Ambulance and Life Link III. The various responders worked together to provide lifesaving efforts and put out the fire. As an example of their quick thinking, two of the Clinton First Responders removed the tailgates from their pickup trucks to use as backboards to safely move the victims from the spreading grass fire.

"In both of these incidents, the heroism of citizens, combined with the coordinated efforts and professionalism of our emergency responders, absolutely saved lives," said Sheriff Ross Litman,

Among those being honored with 911 Life Saver Awards for their roles in the accident on Highway 169 are: citizens William, Gary and Timothy Glad, and Nicholas Bigo; St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputy Warren Johnson; Tower Ambulance members Nick Levens, Steve Altenburg and Erik Thorp; Breitung Firefighters Matt Tuchel, Matt Tomsitch, Doug Carter and Wayne Kultala; Essentia Health – Virginia Registered Nurse Greg Gulki; Life Link III Flight Nurses Sharon Baker and Larry Starks and Pilot Bill Schmidt; and St Louis County Emergency Communications Specialists Patti Quillen, Emily Warnygora, Kaycee Garza, Julie Fogarty and Deb Weisen.

From the second accident, honorees include citizens Richard and Rachel Price, St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputies Jeremy Belleville, Ryan Woodman and Timothy Officer; Clinton Firefighters and First Responders James Theodore, Lyndsey Ziemer, Chris Erickson, Tiffany Kunnari, Doug Hohenstein, Michele Mayre and Brian Mayre; Mt. Iron Firefighter Tom Claviter, Minnesota State Patrol Officer Todd Lindstrom; Virginia Ambulance members Tiffany Larson, Jeffrey Cielocha, Christopher Clark, Francis Mell, Joseph Baker and Joel Martinson; Life Link III Flight Nurse Cory Pylkka, Flight Medic Larry Starks and Pilot Wayne Short; and St Louis County Emergency Communications Specialists Sarah Speikers, Ryan Abrahamson, Dawn Goman and Cheryl Boso.

Since 1993, St. Louis County has recognized the efforts of those individuals who have worked together, often risking their own safety, to save others. The 911 Life Saver Award honors those worthy of such recognition, but also serves to educate the public on how the County's 911 system works.

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