

Off-duty Navajo officer saves man on ledge

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 24 December 2021 04:54



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. —Navajo Police Department Window Rock District Officer Jershon Begay received the Gallup Police Department “Citation of Life Saving Commendation” on Nov. 18 for outstanding achievement and meritorious service in the performance of his duty while off-duty.

While off-duty and traveling eastbound on Interstate 40 on Oct. 18, Begay noticed a man standing over the ledge of a bridge near Mile Marker 26 in Gallup.

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He notified emergency dispatch and circled back on the westbound lanes to interact with the man until Gallup Police Department officers arrived. He said he saw a rope around the neck of the subject tied to a metal railing on the bridge.

Gallup Police Department Officer Cindy Romancito arrived on the scene and began communicating with the man, giving Officer Begay the opportunity to grab the man from the ledge.

That action led the male to reach into his waistline and pull out a hatchet, raise it over his head and threaten Begay. Begay pulled the man onto the pavement where Romancito applied handcuffs.

The man was reportedly suffering from delusional thoughts and said he had been trying to ask for help, but was afraid people were wanting to harm him and that his family was kidnapped or taken away. Begay immediately established rapport with the man and reassured him that he was safe and his concerns were heard. The man was taken to the local hospital for an evaluation.

Begay was presented the commendation by Gallup Police Department Lieutenant Francie Martinez and Captain Erin Toadlena-Pablo at the Navajo Tribal Park in Window Rock, Ariz.

Begay's family, Navajo Police Department leadership and officers, as well as Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez were in attendance as the citation was presented.

"Officer Jershon Begay is an outstanding officer whose leadership and dedication to public safety is commendable," Chief Phillip Francisco said. "On behalf of the Navajo Police Department, we congratulate Officer Begay on receiving this recognition and we thank the Gallup Police Department for recognizing and honoring him with this commendation."

Officer Begay has been with the Navajo Police Department since 2015 and currently serves with the Window Rock District.

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