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Florida Police Chief Association (FPCA) Life Saving Award Recognition (NB)

The FPCA Lifesaving Award is sponsored by the Harris Foundation. This award is designed to recognize officers for an exceptional lifesaving act that places their life in danger. Police officers put their lives on the line each day to serve and protect their communities. Police Officers also save lives.

Sergeant Steven Sweeting of the Gainesville Police Department who did just that. On August 31, 2019, at 4:26 am a traffic crash occurred near the intersection of US Hwy 441 and SW Williston Road. This was a head-on collision that occurred and the vehicles were both on-fire. The location of the incident is not in the Gainesville Police Department’s jurisdiction, but the adjoining jurisdiction. Sergeant Sweeting responded to the location to see if he could help. Sweeting was the first Gainesville Police Officer to arrive at the crash scene. One vehicle was fully engulfed in flames and the second vehicle began to catch fire as well. Sergeant Sweeting approached the second vehicle and learned that there was someone alive inside, screaming for help. Sergeant Sweeting immediately took charge and updated other responding officers, fire, and EMS of the dire nature of the situation. He then began to break out the rear passenger window to gain access to the woman screaming for help. Sergeant Sweeting was able to break the window and unlock the rear door. Sergeant Sweeting, Deputy Stadnicki, and firefighters pulled the second female from the vehicle. Unfortunately, she was deceased.

Each individual risked their life to save the occupants of the second vehicle. During the efforts to rescue the crash victims, the other vehicle was exploding and the fire was inching closer and closer to the police and firefighters. Due to the heroic efforts on this night, Sergeant Sweeting was able to save a life. That day, Sergeant Sweeting risked his own life to save someone else. Sergeant Steven Sweeting, Gainesville Police Department is presented with the FPCA's 2019/2020 LifeSaving Award.

This item is connected to Goal 5: "Best in Class" Neighbor Services.

The City Commission hear a brief summary and recognize the awardee Sergeant Steven Sweeting.