

WXOW (La Crosse)

Police Officer, Deputy Honored by U.S. Justice Dept.

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By Pete Zervakis

ONALASKA, Wisconsin (WXOW) -- At an honorary ceremony in city hall, in the presence of U.S. Senator Herb Kohl (D, Wisconsin), two local law enforcement officials became a part of history.

"Their actions on March 29, 2010 are shining examples of the excellence of law enforcement in this state," said John Vaudreuil, the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin.

Onalaska Police Officer James Page and La Crosse County Deputy Dan Baudek were just two of 12 state law enforcement officials nationwide to receive the U.S. Justice Department's Congressional Badge of Bravery.

This was the first year the award was presented.

"They're really special, these officers," said Kohl. "Their bravery, their courage and their professionalism are outstanding."

On March 29, 2010 Page and Baudek were sent to a house in the town of Hamilton -- after dispatch received a call from a girl claiming her father had stabbed her mother.

When the pair arrived on the scene, they found the house's garage engulfed in flames -- with both the caller and her sister inside.

Officer Page and Deputy Baudek entered the burning structure and brought both the girls, and their dogs, out to safety.

The suspect in the stabbing, Keith Marchbanks, then approached the two officials with a butcher knife.

After Marchbanks disregarding numerous commands from Page and Baudek to "Get on the ground," Page fired a round into the man's torso.

Marchbanks survived, and was eventually sentenced to 22 years in prison.

"I've wondered a lot, you know, about why me?" Page said. "What brought everyone there together at that house that night."

"At the same time though, I'm glad it was me," he added. "Because I made it through everything OK. I wouldn't want another officer to go through what I went through."