Community rallies around injured police officer

In the early morning hours of Jan. 27, 2014, a Springfield police officer on patrol noticed suspicious activity behind a business that had closed for the evening.

He called for back-up, and Officer Aaron Pearson and another police officer arrived at the scene to assist their fellow officer.

Police investigators believe Officer Pearson was shot by a man who has four convictions for resisting arrest or assaulting a law enforcement officer.

Officer Pearson suffered what Police Chief Paul Williams referred to as “career-ending injuries.”

He is listed in serious but stable condition at a Springfield hospital and has a long road of rehabilitation ahead of him. There are several fundraisers planned to benefit a fund set up by the Missouri Fraternal Order of Police Foundation to help Officer Pearson and his family with their long-term expenses. His medical expenses and salary are currently covered by the City’s worker’s compensation plan. For more information about work comp benefits, please refer to Merit Rule No. 22.

Officer Pearson, who is 30 and has a wife and two children, has been in the Springfield Police Department for three years. He received a commendation last year for his role in a successful methamphetamine investigation.

Officer Pearson is originally from Blue Springs, east of Kansas City. Both his father and father-in-law were law enforcement officers.

Officer Pearson’s background

Officer Pearson wrote about himself last year on cops.com because he was part of an episode of “Cops” recorded in Springfield. “I got the law enforcement bug from my father, Winston Pearson, initially. My dad has been with the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department for 30 years. He always told me I would not get rich becoming a police officer, but I would love going to work every day and that is true. My father-in-law, Tom Dempsey, is a retired sergeant with the Springfield Police Department,” he wrote.

About his first arrest, Officer Pearson wrote, “I was still on field training and I was sent to a domestic assault. I was very nervous and tried to be very thorough. I arrested the male for third-degree domestic assault. He was highly intoxicated, but it was a relatively uneventful arrest, in hindsight.”

“The best part of the job is the variety. I know this has been said thousands of times, but two days are never alike,” he wrote.

How to donate to Officer Pearson and his family

• Tax-deductible donations to assist Officer Pearson and his family with long-term expenses can be made through the Missouri Fraternal Order of Police Foundation, a 501 C3.

The primary account location is Commerce Bank at 2770 W.

See PEARSON on page 3.

BeCivilBeHeard.com
Speak out with courage
Express yourself with honor and conviction.

Mission trip to Nicaragua
Four firefighters travel to the third-world country to offer help.

911
The department took nearly 500,000 calls in 2014.

Do You Know?
Get to know Nii Abrahams in Public Information.
Springfield Firefighters help families build homes in Nicaragua

Four Springfield firefighters traveled to Nicaragua in January to help construct new homes through Rainbow Network, a Springfield-based non-profit.

Captain Jeff Prior, Rescue Specialist Matt Lyon, Firefighter Daniel Speights and Firefighter Matt Fields left Springfield Jan. 11 for Nicaragua. The group helped Nicaraguan families begin construction on a 25-house project.

“Most people there live in shacks with dirt floors,” Fields said. “They usually have 10 or 15 people living in about a 200-to-300-square-foot home.”

The homes are located in the community of Las Rosas in the San Ramon Network, which is in the mountains near the large city of Matagalpa.

In addition, Fields has sponsored a young student, Fernando, in honor of the Springfield Fire Department.

“Fernando wants to grow up and be a fireman and that’s why Rainbow paired us together,” Fields said. “I was very excited for the opportunity to see him.”

In addition to construction, the team visited medical clinics, feeding centers, banks, businesses, a fire station and other established housing projects.

“It’s a beautiful country, extremely nice people, they are all very friendly,” Fields said. “This was my third time down there, and last year when I came back is when we first started planning our trip this year,” he said.

His first time to the Central American country, he said, changed his life.

“I couldn’t come back home and do the same things, be the same person that I was before I left,” he said, “It’s amazing, it’s really wonderful.”

Fire Chief David Hall said the sacrifice of his firefighters is admirable, but not surprising.

“Firefighters tend to be very compassionate – they care about people they see the need,” he said.

He said it gives him a great sense of pride to see those like Fields taking the initiative to help, not just here in Missouri.

“To make a difference in other communities in other countries as well and I think that says a lot about his character,” he said.

Fields is already planning his next trip back to Nicaragua.
Pearson from page 1

Republic Road, but donations are accepted at any Commerce Bank location.

• Checks can be sent to: Missouri FOP Foundation, 2101 W. Chesterfield Blvd. C100-91, Springfield, MO 65807. Write “Springfield Police” in the memo line.

• A GiveForward.com fundraiser account has been set up by several high school friends of Amanda, Aaron Pearson’s wife. As of Feb. 2, more than $20,000 had been raised for the family. Visit www.giveforward.com/fundraiser/3dj1/love-for-officer-pearson-and-family.

• Drop off checks at either Springfield Police Department location: Main Headquarters at 321 E. Chestnut Expressway or the South District Station at 2650 W. Battlefield.

Fundraising events

• Inkspiration Tattoo & Piercing is donating 10 percent of all tattoo sales through Feb. 11. Inkspiration Tattoo & Piercing is at 1950 S. Glenstone Ave., Suite D. Call 417-882-1115.

• CrossFit Provision is hosting a special Hero WOD (Workout of the Day) at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. Feb. 7 to raise money for Officer Pearson and his family. You do not have to be a CFP member to participate; $5 donations are accepted with all proceeds going to the Pearson family. For every dollar donated, CrossFit Provision will match up to $250. CFP will also be selling $1 raffle tickets during the WOD with half of that money going to the winner and the other half going to the Pearsons. CrossFit Provision is at 425 W. Plainview Road. Call 417-893-0297.

• Straight Edge Barber is donating 10 percent of proceeds from all haircuts through Feb. 7. Pearson and his son are regular clients at the barber shop. Included with men’s haircuts: before and after shampoos, straight razor neck shave with hot shave cream and a style. Women’s cuts are $12. Men’s cuts are $15. Military/law enforcement discount is $12. Women’s cuts are $25. Straight Edge Barber is at 1839-B E. Independence St., Studio 24. Schedule by phone, 417-379-5474 or online at www.417straightedge.com.

• Applebee’s at 1855 E. Primrose St. is having a Pancake Breakfast All-You-Can-Eat Fundraiser, 7-10 a.m. Feb. 7. Cost is $5 with $4 going directly to the Missouri FOP Foundation fund for Officer Pearson and his family. Tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door. Call 417-883-4700.

• Pimp My Hair, 1002 S. Glenstone, will host a “Cuts for Officer Pearson” event 1-6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8. All proceeds from haircuts will go to the Pearsons. Raffle tickets also on sale for prizes with all money raised going to the family.

• Nakato Japanese Steakhouse will donate 50 percent of its total food sales 4:30-10 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 9 to the Pearsons. Reservations are recommended, but they still leave room for walk-ins.

• Chili’s Give Back Event. With every flier presented on Feb. 11, Chili’s Springfield will donate 15% of the sales back to this great cause. Flyers can be downloaded from the Prayers for Pearson Facebook page. 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Feb. 11, Chili’s on South Glenstone.

• Louie Michael’s Benefit and Thank You Concert at Cartoons Oyster Bar & Grill, 1614 S. Glenstone. 6-11 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 12. Mark your calendar for this great evening of music for a great cause. There will be no cover charge for this event, but we hope people make an appropriate donation to Officer Pearson and his family. These bands, venue and many others are donating their time, venue, efforts and more because they care about this gentleman and his family’s well being, so give generously.

• Springfield Express Hockey Game. Tickets, donations, merchandise to benefit Officer Pearson, 7-10 p.m, Feb. 20, Jordan Valley Ice Park.

• “We Cut from the Heart” / Midwest Technical Institute, 3600 S. Glenstone. During the month of February, all proceeds from Saturday services in the student salon will be donated to the Pearsons.

• Mexican Villa South “Chips for Tips” fundraiser. Officers from the SPD will assist wait staff and work for tips which will benefit the Pearsons. 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Feb. 21.

• Domino’s Pizza will donate $1 for every pizza sold in Springfield, Ozark, Nixa & Republic, to the Pearsons all day on Monday, March 2. Please call one hour in advance for large orders.

• Shooter’s Billiards Benefit Pool Tournament. All proceeds will go to the Pearsons. They will match up to $200 to make this event successful. Buy-ins are $20. 1-7 p.m., March 18, 525 S Glenstone.

• Harts Motorcycle Run Benefit for Officer Pearson at the American Legion, 2660 S. Scenic, on April 18. Motorcycle ride with silent auction, live music and more. More fundraising events to help Officer Pearson and his family are being added every day. Please check www.prayersforpearson.com or https://www.facebook.com/PrayersForPearson/ for the most updated information.
MILESTONES

30 years
Regina Maldonado
Traffic Services Officer
Police – 2/15/1985

20 years
Machelle Stacey
Senior Lab Scientist
Health – 2/6/1995

15 years
Terrence Moore
Craftsworker
Public Works – 2/12/2000

10 years
Dennis Mork
Parks Maintenance
Working Leader
Parks – 2/5/2005

William Walters
Custodian
Airport – 2/22/2005

5 years
Leah Kidwell
Community Health Nurse
Health – 2/13/2010

Benjamin Wahl
Firefighter
Fire – 2/16/2010

John Choate
Maintenance Worker
Environmental Services – 2/27/2010

Promotions
Amanda Becker
Community Recreation Coordinator – Parks

Shane Judy
Senior Signal Technician – Public Works

Jason Marcum
Police Corporal – Police

Mark Nelson
Community Recreation Coordinator – Parks

Jeffrey Nygaard
Stuart Rutledge
Plant Shift Supervisors – Environmental Services

Retirements
James Mosier
Utility Worker
Airport – 13 years

Sue Murphy
Accounting Services Representative
Finance – 20 years

Terri Oldham
Accounting Clerk II
Health – 17 years

Gregory Wheelen
Police Lieutenant
Police – 25 years

Welcome
Michael Armstrong
Equipment Technician – Parks

Jonathan Peitz
Project Engineer – Public Works

Tracy Polk
Workforce Development Supervisor – Workforce Development

Alex Schriver
Golf Course Worker – Parks

Barbara Schulte
Workforce Development Specialist – Workforce Development

Mark Seery
Fleet System Technician – Public Works

Lauren Sweet
Zoo Keeper – Parks

Lynn Vanden Berg
Community Recreation Coordinator – Parks

Brown leather couch, built in recliner on both ends. Good condition. $300.00. Linda #300-9917

2004 Mercury Grand Marquis, 4.6L V8, motor is strong, transmission is smooth. Rides like a cloud. Had collision with very large buck deer – has damage to front of car. Could be repaired for a solid driver. Asking $1,500. Call Nancy @ 417-425-6557.

2-1953 Ford Crown Victorias – one is a parts car and the other is to rebuild. This comes with a rebuilt motor, transmission, manuals etc., all for $3,000 or best offer. Call 417-872-7636 for more information.

FOR SALE

Farm fresh eggs for sale at $3.00 per 18. Please call Bonnie at 402-650-7614 or email at redplaidgirl@hotmail.com
FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Sheila Crosswhite POL
Dan Dudley LAW
J. B. Lilley FR
Monica Meador PDV
Robert Monier POL
Lauren Rosendale LAW
Nicholas Watson-Woodman LAW

2 Melissa Boles PRK
Laura Henderson HL
Ryan Howard FR
Peggy Mahan PRK
James Williams PW

3 Jeffrey Ferneau POL
Jody Galloway AIR
Clay Goddard HL
Krisopher Kauffman ES
Mary Jo Kerringer FN
Jay Lisenby FR
Christopher Marsh PW
Paul Nahon PRK
Donald Nix PRK
Beverly Schmitz AIR
Joshua Shank AIR

4 Jimmy Avant PRK
James Brown AIR
Jason Denney PW
Oliver Hoedel ES
Amy Mooney PW
Jacob Morris PW
Marvin Neumiller PRK
Paul Nahon PRK
Donald Nix PW
Beverly Schmitz AIR
Joshua Shank AIR

5 Rebecca Conroy PRK
Ben King PW
Michael Marshall PRK
Brian Reeves PRK

6 Charles Alexander PW
Michael Hunsucker PRK
Susan Kramer PW
Kimberly Mahan PW
Anita Powers PRK
Mark Sears PW
Kristy Stacy PW
Danielle Yaw PW

7 Jennifer Duzan ES
Mark Nelson FR
Jerry Reese HR
Andrea Swearingen PW
Shawn Williams POL

8 James Cox ES
Scott Hill POL
Francene Marchant PRK
Alex Schriver PRK

9 Bill Blevins POL
Jason Strong PRK

10 Mark Duncan PW
Mary Maerz PW
John Waitman PW
Anita Wood PW

11 Dwight Fast PRK
Timothy Greise PRK
Justin Hilton PRK
Chad Ray PRK
Steven Sharp PRK

12 Jerrod Atnip PW
Andrew Dierks PW
Katherine Dunnegan PW
Brad Eddy PW
Charles Kelley PW
Andrea Pace PW
Allana Palmer PW
Kent Shipley PW
Corine Stewart PW
Daniel Thompson PW

13 Jesse Blanton PW
Marjorie Brown PW
Claudia Crighton PW
Jason Gabatham PW
Heath Jones PW
Jason Kitta PW
Jermiah Lockett PW
Terrence Moore PW
Harry Owen PW
Christopher Rasmussen PW
Donnie Rice PW
Brian Schafer PW
Ryan Van Fosson PW

14 Mark Miller AIR
Sheila Samek PRK
Linda Westerman POL

15 Devin Freeman PRK
Jeffrey Martin FR

16 Stacey Blair 911
Paula Brookshire PW
Jon Blankenship ES
Sandra Chapman ES
David Kenyon ES
Danny Newton ES
Zachary Pugh ES
Clinton Ryan ES

17 Timothy Gomas PW
Eric Jones PRK
Michael Kuss FR
Jennifer Simmons PRK

18 Gabrielle Barton PW
Eric Claussen PW
Scott Kamnykowski PW
Thomas Luellen PW
Luz Melendez PW
Wesley Wren PW
Jordan Young PW

19 Lindsay Jackson HR
Kevin Trogdon FR
Ryan Zinter FR

20 Eric Hawkins PW
Nelson Kibby PRK
Dennis Mork PRK
DeAnn Reynolds PRK
Todd Williams PRK

21 Kelsey Dunn PRK
Dana Hilton PRK
Jacob Keller PRK
Bette Schutt PRK
Rachel Sloss PRK
Madeline Tate PRK
Kyle Vander Linden PRK
Octavia White PRK

22 Grant Dorrell PW
Jubal Hicks PRK
Rena Rippe PW
Jessica Torres PW
Susan Urbina Rohrer PW

23 Pam Bryant PW
Rachel Colley PW
Karen Powell PW

24 Trey Brown PRK
Holly Brymer PRK
Joshua Ludwig PRK
Joshua Morrow PRK
Erin Palicki ES
Kim Reser PRK
Cassandra Siperko HL
Matthew Thomas POL
Richard Wichern PRK

25 Chris Addison PRK
Shawn Haffner PRK
Carolyn Heavin PRK
Kathy Highbee POL
Meredith Murray WD
Randall Ragar POL

26 Ana Felix PRK
Meredith Medley PRK
Hannah Parker PRK
Dean Westermeyer 911

27 Cara Erwin FR
Brian Olson AIR
Benjamin Huelskamp PRK
Lennie Peterie PW
Benjamin Rauch PW
Patrick Smith PW
Emily Thomas PRK
John Waldo PRK
Linda Williams HR

28 Elizabeth Bruner PRK
Darrel Coney POL
Yvette Crouch PDV
Donna Rivers HL
Andrew Ruas FR
David Snider POL
Randall Stevens PW
McKenzie Wisdom ES

29 Ryan Swearingin PW
In 2014, the Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications department averaged more than 20,500 911 calls per month with nearly 80% from mobile devices, says Director Zim Schwartze.

The Springfield-Greene County 911 telecommunicators in the Operations Center fielded 490,143 total phone calls (emergency and non-emergency) with 246,596 of those as incoming emergency 911 calls. These statistics show an increase of approximately 3% of total calls handled as compared to 2013.

The 80% for wireless 911 calls in 2014 is above the national average of which ranges between 70-75% that most dispatch centers receive from mobile phones. With cell phone usage increasing over the past decade, dispatch centers have seen landline usage decrease and mobile devices severely increase. Springfield-Greene County has gone from approximately 40% in the early 2000’s to the current 80%.

The volume of wireless calls provides extra challenges and delays for telecommunicators who must take more time to process the call, determine if multiple calls are being received about the same incident and then dispatch the appropriate emergency personnel.

Still to date, Missouri is the only state that does not collect any fees or tax money from wireless usage to help fund 911 dispatch centers. Several state organizations continue to work towards a goal of passing statewide legislation regarding wireless funding.

A countywide 911 sales tax was passed by voters in April 2007 which provides all funding for the Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications department. The City and Greene County worked together in the mid-2000’s to organize the current structure of the 911 system. This was ahead of many other counties across the State of Missouri who still struggle with appropriate funding for 911 services.

Currently, the department employs 70 full-time employees, including telecommunicators and administration, who provide dispatch services for 14 fire districts and nine law enforcement agencies countywide. Medical calls are immediately transferred to the appropriate local hospital for assistance.

911 telecommunicators undergo an extensive training program and must successfully complete approximately 700 hours of training before they can be considered a fully trained dispatcher. This past year was extremely challenging as a new set of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software was implemented in the Operations Room with obstacles that had to be overcome.

“Our 911 telecommunicators handle a wide variety of emergency calls and situations from stressed and distraught callers. In addition, this year had its share of technical issues with the CAD upgrade our telecommunicators had to work through daily. We are fortunate to have a highly developed training program for new hires as well as continuous ongoing training which is imperative in our department,” Schwartz said. “I’m very proud of the work they do day in and day out serving our community and user agencies.”

This past year, 911 staff received two top honors. Assistant Director JR Webb was named 911 Director of the Year, and Training and Education Manager Kris Inman received the George A. Major Trainer of the Year by the Missouri Chapters of APCO (Association of Public Safety Communications Officials) and NENA (National Emergency Number Association).

Schwartze reminds citizens that 911 should be used only when a response is needed from police, fire, or emergency medical ambulance personnel.
What did you want to “be” when you grew up?

Not to sound cliché, but I have a real passion for people, college students specifically, ministry and leadership. One of my biggest natural strengths is leadership development, and my public relations skills have improved drastically over the past year. My “dream job” would be a campus pastor at a university, on the leadership development staff for a university, or in public relations for a large church. Fatherhood sounds pretty cool too ... but that can wait!

What was your favorite TV show as a child?

My favorite show of all time is 'The Cosby Show.' I've seen every episode more than once and it's something my family loved to watch together.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Passionate.

If they made a movie about your life, who would play you?


What do you like most about your job?

I value working with quality teams, and, outside of my campus ministry staff, I've never worked with a more tight-knit, passionate, talented, efficient and engaging group of people, ever. Without even realizing it, they challenge me every single day.

Assurant City’s new life insurance vendor

Assurant is the City’s new life insurance vendor effective March 1. If you are an eligible, regular fulltime employee, you have the opportunity to enroll in guaranteed life insurance coverage during this special open enrollment period, which ends Feb. 13. Plan information and applications can be found on City Share through Forms – Human Resources – Life Insurance.

If you are currently enrolled in life insurance through the City, you must complete a new application in order to continue coverage. If a new application is not submitted by Feb. 13, your current coverage will end March 1. Completed forms must be received by Feb. 13. If you have questions, please contact Krystal Ray at 864-1608 or benefits@springfieldmo.gov

Transportation Management Center’s Roger Lile to retire

Please join us in wishing Roger Lile a happy retirement after many years of outstanding work. His retirement reception will be 2-4 p.m., Feb. 11 at the Transportation Management Center, 1007 W. Chestnut Expressway.

Save the Date! Battle of the Boot Camps returns Sept. 30

“Battle of the Boot Camps” is back this year and will be hosted noon-1 p.m. on Sept. 30 at the Drury field. Teams of City employees will be gathered to compete in a special battle, and they’ll be using all their might to “soak” the Leadership Team and even win 4 hours of paid leave!

Whether or not you are interested in competing or spectating, please take just a minute to complete this 4-question survey to help us plan. Thank you!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BattleofBootCamps

Big Brothers Big Sisters needs mentors for boys

Big Brothers Big Sisters currently has a waiting list of 48 young boys that still need a mentor in their lives. Anyone over the age of 18 can be a mentor, and it only takes a little time each week. Dylan McKinsey, who is the Recruitment Coordinator for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ozarks, explained that, “Being a mentor in our programs isn’t difficult. It’s all about building a relationship with a child, so if you want to do that while watching football or taking a bike ride, it’s up to you.” To find out more or to sign up contact Dylan McKinsey at 417-889-9136 or dmckinsey@bigbro.com

Public Works’ Eric Claussen named one of SBJ’s 40 Under 40

The Springfield Business Journal announced Dec. 20, 2014, that Public Works’ Eric Claussen, P.E., has been chosen as one of SBJ’s 40 Under 40 honorees. Since the inaugural year in 1999, the 40 Under 40 awards continue to honor individuals based on their professional and community accomplishments. The 2015 class of 40 Under 40 will be celebrated during a 5 p.m. ceremony March 24 at Ramada Plaza Hotel & Oasis Convention Center, 2546 N. Glenstone Ave. Tickets are $30 apiece and can be purchased at SBJ.net/4040.
To: Rick Crismas, Operations Manager and Custodian of Records for 911

On Jan. 9, an e-mail was sent to Rick Crismas’ supervisor from Dan Patterson, Greene County prosecuting attorney, thanking Rick for all the assistance he provides to the Prosecutors Office in the pursuit of justice. As the custodian of records, he provides 911 call recordings for various agencies. Rick testifies at court hearings to the authenticity of 911 calls. Dan Patterson also forwarded an email from Evelyn Keith, paralegal, complimenting Rick as an “exemplary individual that so many people call on for last minute needs and he does his very best to make it happen. He stands alone in providing this vital piece of the puzzle that allows justice to be achieved.” Evelyn Keith wanted to let Rick Crismas know what a difference he makes every day.

Evelyn Keith and Dan Patterson
Greene County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office

To: Chief of Police Paul Williams

I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to officers A. Pearson and McClure and to the Springfield Police Department. On Friday, Nov. 21, 2014, these gentlemen agreed to drive to Olathe, Kansas and testify for me in a case that was pending against Stevin A. McCord. Both officers arrived early and were well prepared and familiar with their reports. Both officers did an excellent job testifying and had a wonderful courtroom presence. They did a wonderful job representing the Springfield Police Department. At the conclusion of our hearing, Mr. McCord was sentenced to 42 months in prison. I could not have accomplished this without Officer Pearson’s and Officer McClure’s testimony. I sincerely appreciate their efforts and their professionalism on this case.

Sincerely,
Laura E. Smith
Assistant District Attorney
Johnson County, Kansas

To: Chief of Police Paul Williams

I’m celebrating that my case is finally over and Judge Holden awarded Diane Greer a 20-year sentence. I had no idea how light my spirit would feel until this occurred. I just wanted you to know how honored I felt before I went in the courtroom that Friday afternoon. Standing at the courtroom door was Corporal Neal McAmis and numerous detectives. They pretty well filled the courtroom and I have to believe their presence influenced the judge. I had to work hard to keep it together. I really don’t have the words to express how much it meant to me that these officers would come and support me that late on a Friday afternoon. Neal was the only officer I knew, and to think all these officers who didn’t know me would take the time and effort to support me was phenomenal!

Again, my two-year journey with your detective has been the silver lining in all I’ve gone through. I’ll forever be in Corporal McAmis’ debt and I would like all the officers who came out to support me to know how much it touched my heart and impacted the outcome of the case!

In sincere appreciation, Carol Connor

Follow the GOLDEN GOOSE

I am pleased to present the Golden Goose Award to Colten Harris. He always has a professional approach when dealing with citizens and the Bridge & Waterway work group. He utilizes a team approach in his interactions with our work group by understanding that our maintenance activities take as much precedence as storm water projects. Colten also will always set aside time to assist us when questions arise during the day. I would like to thank him for his dedication to the City.

Everett Kelley
Public Works