Collin County

Going the **E**xtra **M**ile (**GEM**) Recognition Form

Honoree's Name: Jerry Amon

Honoree's Job Title: Mental Health Deputy

Department: Sheriff's Office

Years of Service with the County: 13

Why the Honoree is receiving a GEM Award including dates:

Please refer to the attached letter from Judge Weldon Copeland. Deputy Amon's involvement did contribute to the safe ending to this incident.

Approved by elected official or department head on the 10th day of MAY, 2016

Signature of Elected Official
or Department Head

Terry Box

Printed Name

Palmisano 5-10/MS Approve

WELDON COPELAND
Collin County Probate Court
Collin County Courthouse
2100 Bloomdale Road #12010
McKinney, Texas 75071 - 8318

972-548-3811 Metro 972-424-1460 ext. 3811
e-mail: wcopeland @ collincountytexas.gov

April 29, 2016

Sheriff Terry Box
Collin County Sheriff's Department
4300 Community Avenue
McKinney, Texas 75071

Chief Greg Conley
McKinney Police Department
2200 Taylor Burk Drive
McKinney, Texas 75071

Re: Commendation of the actions of Officer Eric Johnson, Officer Sonny Martin, Officer Jake Hildebrandt, Deputy Esmeralda Figueroa, and Deputy Jerry Amon

Dear Sheriff Box and Chief Conley,

This letter is written to commend the efforts and the resourcefulness of Officer Eric Johnson, Officer Sonny Martin, Officer Jake Hildebrandt, Deputy Esmeralda Figueroa, and Deputy Jerry Amon in dealing with and averting a potential tragedy on April 28, 2016, at the [redacted] store in McKinney.

At about 2:30 p.m., yesterday, [redacted] sat at a table adjacent to mine in the dining area at [redacted] for an extended time without ever eating his food. He walked away from his uneaten meal and climbed about fifteen feet to the very top of one of the store shelves. A store employee, [redacted], quickly retrieved an electric lift and attempted to get [redacted] to come down. [redacted] loudly and forcefully threatened to dive head-first to the concrete floor if [redacted] raised the electric lift. [redacted] threw down a debit card claiming that it contained his life savings and instructing that it be given to his brother after his death. He also made statements indicating a religious belief that it was right for him to die. I called the chief mental health county clerk and asked that the police and the mental health sheriff's deputies be called. [redacted] at some point climbed up to the rafters. It appeared that [redacted] was absolutely serious about jumping to his death, or that he could accidently fall to his death because of the dangerous situation that he had put himself in. An attached photograph shows [redacted] walking on the rafters.

Officer Eric Johnson and Officer Jake Hildebrandt quickly arrived and took charge of the scene. Customers and store employees retrieved all of the mattresses in the store and spread them on the floor beneath [redacted]

Shortly thereafter, several additional officers and Deputy Amon and Deputy Figueroa arrived. Officer Sonny Martin took charge of the attempts to talk [redacted] down and did a masterful job of establishing rapport and developing trust. Still, [redacted] was absolutely unrelenting. At some point, [redacted] tied an electric extension cord that was suspended from the ceiling around his neck, while telling the officers that he would jump and hang himself if they attempted to come closer.

After about an hour-and-a-half, Officer Johnson saw an opportunity to involve Deputy Figueroa in the discussions. For the next thirty minutes, Officer Johnson and Deputy Figueroa continued the efforts to convince [redacted] to come down. [redacted] responded only with repeated serious threats to jump if anyone approached him. The electric lift was slowly moved closer to [redacted] throughout this last thirty minutes, though its movement had to be repeatedly halted and restarted as additional threats were made every time the lift was brought closer.

Finally, about two hours after the beginning of the ordeal, [redacted] was clearly both mentally and physical exhausted. There were concerns that his legs might be cramping, and the danger of an accidental fall was increasing with the passage of time. The lift was positioned close enough to make a final move toward [redacted], even as he climbed to the highest point in the rafters. Officer Johnson used a pair of wire cutters to reach up and cut the live electric extension cord that was tied around [redacted] neck. The line sparked when it was partially cut with the first effort. Officer Johnson continued cutting the live electric line and was quickly able to cut through it completely. Almost simultaneously, or just seconds thereafter, the officers and deputies were able to get close enough to pull [redacted] into the lift and bring him down.

When everyone was safely on the ground; the officers and deputies carefully and kindly placed [redacted] ont
o a gurney and spoke compassionately to him, assuring him that he was going to be taken to hospital and that everything was going to be better for him.

This is a matter that will never make the news because of the great work done by the officers and deputies involved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Weldon Copeland

Weldon Copeland

cc: Lt. Butch Thornhill