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## **Sheriff's ASTREA Deputies Honored For East County Rescue** *Aviation Association Recognizes Deputies For Saving Skier's Life*



They help keep San Diego County safe from high above the ground. Today, we are proud to announce two deputies with the Sheriff's ASTREA (Aerial Support To Regional Enforcement Agencies) helicopter unit have been honored by the Airborne Public Safety Association (APSA) for the demanding technical rescue of a cross country skier near Pine Valley earlier this year.

ASTREA Deputy Pilot Bill Liniewicz and ASTREA Tactical Flight Officer Michael Davis (seen in the center of the above photo) received the prestigious Captain 'Gus' Crawford Memorial Aircrew Of The Year Award during a ceremony at the APSA Conference in Omaha, Nebraska on July 19<sup>th</sup>. The honor is given to individuals whose flying efforts and professionalism epitomize the APSA's motto of "To Serve and Protect from the Air." They were chosen from a large number of other award submissions from air support units all across the country.

On February 24, 2019, Liniewicz and Davis were flying in ASTREA 1 when they were dispatched to a call of a cross country skier in distress at Big Laguna Lake. When they arrived at the scene, they found the victim had fallen through the frozen lake and was struggling to stay afloat.





Photo by Sheriff's ASTREA Deputy Chad Dollick

Liniewicz and Davis wasted no time in getting the man to safety. While hovering over the skier, ASTREA 1 dragged a floatation device across the ice and into his hands. Once he grabbed it, the skier was gently pulled across the ice to shore where onlookers helped remove his cold, wet clothing and replaced it with some of their own. The skier later said that had ASTREA 1 not arrived when they did he would not have had the strength to stay afloat or hold on to the rescue device.

The skier was flown to the hospital, treated for severe hypothermia and made a full recovery.

It was the first time Liniewicz and Davis had performed an ice water rescue. They both said the rescue was probably the greatest day of their law enforcement careers.

"The life saving actions and bravery displayed by Deputies Bill Liniewicz and Michael Davis are a fine example of the dedication and commitment displayed by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department on a daily basis," said Sheriff Bill Gore. "We congratulate our Sheriff's ASTREA Deputies on their incredible honor."

The Sheriff's ASTREA Unit enhances public and officer safety by providing effective law enforcement, search and rescue, fire suppression, and emergency service air support to public safety agencies throughout San Diego County. To watch a video of ASTREA in action, follow the Sheriff's Department on VIMEO: <https://vimeo.com/314534472>. To learn more about ASTREA, visit: <https://www.sdsheiff.net/astrea>.

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