

Liaison officer returns

Menomonie police will bear costs of additional overtime

By Pamela Powers

Menomonie News Bureau

MENOMONIE — It's official: The Menomonie school police liaison officer is back.

The Menomonie City Council on Monday unanimously approved the contract for the officer that was approved last week by the Menomonie school board.

The school board will spend

\$58,800 for a full-time police liaison officer in the high school through June 11. Officer Jim Jasicki was in the school Monday.

The agreement between the school board and City Council expired in July, leaving the school district without a liaison officer as students returned to school in September.

In the past, the cost of the

position was evenly split between the school district and the city. The cost for a full year is estimated at \$100,000 including wages, benefits and equipment.

School board President Colleen Davis has said the school board will have to look at all its options next year regarding the costs for a full-time officer.

Police Chief Wayne Stolpa earlier had said it was not possible to provide a part-time officer to the school district as in the past because of injuries and

family leave in the department.

City Administrator Lowell Prange said one of the officers has returned, which helped fill the void.

"The bottom line is it is going to cost us some overtime," Prange said.

Stolpa said there now may not be enough personnel for some misdemeanor investigations, and shift gaps will require overtime.

"There wasn't some magical way we did this," he said. "There will be service that does go down from that."



Contributed photo

Sacred Heart Hospital security officer Steve Miescke helped Tiffanie Kohls of Stanley deliver her baby outside the hospital Sunday morning.

Secure delivery

Baby makes entrance on sidewalk outside ER

By Gary Johnson

Leader-Telegram staff

Steve Miescke jokes he provides "curbside delivery" in his part-time job as a security officer at Sacred Heart Hospital.

Miescke, who worked for the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department for 35 years before retiring in April, helped a woman give birth Sunday morning on the sidewalk outside the emergency room doors in 30-degree weather.

"I've been walking around with a big smile on my face," Miescke said Monday. "Fortunately, I was there, and it really made a difference bringing this new one in the world."

The mother, Tiffanie Kohls of Stanley, had nothing but praise for Miescke and the others who helped deliver her healthy son Kellen, who weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce.

"All I can say is thank you," Kohls said. "Under the circumstances, it couldn't have turned out any better."

It's not exactly the way Kohls planned to deliver her fourth child. She awoke at about 2 a.m. Sunday as hard labor began. As a friend cared for her other children, Kohls got a ride to Cadott from another friend.

There she met her mother, Sharon McMahon of Augusta, who drove to Eau Claire.

Kohls knew the birth was nearing while on the U.S. 53 bypass at the Melby Street exit. By the time they reached Clairmont Avenue, Kohls felt it was time to give birth and planned to start pushing. McMahon urged her daughter against having the baby in the car.

"She was yelling, 'Don't push, don't push,'" Kohls said.

McMahon pulled up to the Sacred Heart emergency room doors at 3:55 a.m. and hurried inside to find help. Kohls opened the car door and lay on the cold sidewalk.

"I was crying and I thought, 'I can't believe I'm doing this right here,'" Kohls said. "There was no other option."

McMahon returned with Miescke, who had never delivered a baby during all his years in law enforcement.

"I said, 'You've got to help me; he's coming right now,'" Kohls remembers telling the security guard.

Unable to reach his fellow security guard Ed Henricks — also a retired sheriff's deputy — on the radio, Miescke sent McMahon in to get Henricks in the security office.

Miescke got on the ground with Kohls and saw the baby's head was crowning and starting to come out of the birth canal.

"It all happened real quick," Miescke said.

Henricks arrived and quickly went to the emergency room to find medical help.

Emergency room registered nurse Michelle Hazard soon was on the scene, working with Miescke and Henricks to ensure the baby was born without complications.

"We reassured her and let nature take its course," Miescke said.

Miescke said it was less than 10 minutes from the time Kohls arrived at the hospital until the baby was born.

Maternity department registered nurse Paula Leland wrapped the baby in a blanket, and Kohls was taken on a stretcher to a room.

A day later, mother and son were healthy and thankful for the help they received.

"I can't express how well these people reacted to the situation," Kohls said.

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AGRICULTURE



Megan Parker photos

Above: After being weaned, calves at Prissel Valley Farms near Durand are moved to a post-weaning facility. Below: Calves in pens sucked milk replacer from the feeding machines. A sensor reads the calves' I.D. tags and monitors how much they drink.

Dispensing with the calf chores

Farm touts new automated system

By Megan Parker
Special to the
Leader-Telegram

DURAND — Like an overgrown blender, the automatic calf feeder at Prissel Valley Farms whips up milk replacer mixed with warm water for calves.

On the other side of the wall from where the machine sits, a calf steps up to a nipple. A sensor reads its radio-frequency identification tag, telling the auto-



matic calf-feeding machine if the calf has eaten its daily allotment. If it hasn't, milk replacer drops out a dispenser and into a plastic pitcher. Warm water pours in and the blender mixes it up.

As the calf sucks, the milk replacer disappears from the pitcher. Gurgling sounds follow as the calf gets the last of its meal out of the tubes.

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State picks up case of fuel thefts

Rassbach Oil owner faces felony charges

By Chuck Rupnow
Leader-Telegram staff

Theft charges dismissed late last year against the owner of a Glenwood City fuel delivery company have resurfaced, only this time the state Attorney General's Office is prosecuting the case.

John P. Rassbach, 53, of Glenwood City, the owner of Rassbach Oil Co., was charged Monday in St. Croix County Court with five felonies and nine misdemeanors for defrauding customers of at least \$18,711 since 2005, according to court records. His initial court appearance

is scheduled for Nov. 10. The charges have a combined maximum penalty of nine years in prison and \$140,000 in fines.

Rassbach is accused of charging customers for fuel not delivered, and in some cases making duplicate bills, through which he would charge separate customers for fuel delivery at the same date and time.

The state took over the case because it was believed multiple counties might have been involved; in fact, charges filed Monday involved only St. Croix County customers.

Records indicate District Attorney Eric Johnson and Rassbach had scheduled a plea agreement for Nov. 26, 2008, when Rassbach would have been charged and entered into a deferred conviction agreement on

a charge of felony forgery. Rassbach also would have been found guilty of three counts of misdemeanor theft and been placed on probation for three years, with orders to pay restitution and face possible jail time.

The Leader-Telegram reported the agreement Nov. 25, and Judge Howard Cameron recused himself before charges officially were filed. No reason was given for his recusal. Charges of felony forgery and four misdemeanor counts of theft were later filed but dismissed late last year at Johnson's request.

Johnson said his office had "an agreement" with Rassbach last November, saying the agreement included a jail sentence for Rassbach and restitution for the victims.

Rassbach now is charged with five felony counts of theft, six counts of mis-

demeanor theft and three counts of attempted misdemeanor theft for intentionally deceiving customers, or attempting to deceive customers, with whom he contracted to sell LP gas, gasoline and diesel/fuel oil. Officials claim Rassbach either physically shorted the customer by pumping a portion of the fuel back into his delivery truck, used fraudulent propane delivery invoices, or issued duplicate and triplicate fuel delivery tickets by presenting the same ticket to multiple customers for a single fuel delivery.

The charges arose from an investigation by the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Division of Weights and Measures, and the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department.

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