



VILAS COUNTY SHERIFF

330 Court Street
Eagle River, WI 545421

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release- Sheriff John Niebuhr

Vilas County Sheriff Receives Free Transmitters for Project Lifesaver under the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Assistance Program

Thanks to a grant from the Department of Justice's - Bureau of Justice Assistance, Vilas County Sheriff's Office is Able to Provide Free Project Lifesaver Transmitters for Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease in the Community

Monday, May 03, 2010, Eagle River, WI – Project Lifesaver International, a non-profit organization that helps rescue citizens who are prone to wander due to Alzheimer's disease, autism, and other cognitive disorders, was awarded grant funding to assist in education, awareness, equipment, and public policy efforts to help expand the Project Lifesaver program across the country – directly helping individuals, living with Alzheimer's disease, who wander.

As part of this grant funding, the Vilas County Sheriff's Office was awarded two free Project Lifesaver transmitters, plus a year's supply of batteries and bands for each transmitter, to directly benefit two individuals in the community who have Alzheimer's disease.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as many as 2.4 to 4.5 million Americans currently have Alzheimer's disease. Nearly 1 in 8 individuals will develop Alzheimer's by age 72. Even more frightening, experts estimate that nearly 60% of individuals with Alzheimer's disease will wander at some point during the progression of the disease.

Project Lifesaver addresses this issue of Alzheimer's disease and wandering – it is a certified training program designed for public safety agencies to help them rapidly locate those with cognitive conditions who wander. Individuals wear a personalized, wrist-watch sized radio transmitter that allows first responders to rapidly locate them. Rescue personnel receive specialized training from Project Lifesaver, not only on how to operate the tracking equipment and on search and rescue procedures, but also on key techniques to address behavioral/communication challenges specific to citizens with cognitive conditions—a skill critical to gaining the missing person's trust and facilitating a safe escort home.

Nationwide, over 1,100 public safety agencies are members of Project Lifesaver –including Sheriff's departments, Police departments, Fire, EMS and more. To date, there have been over 2,100 successful searches with no serious injuries or fatalities ever reported.

The Vilas County Sheriff's Office also seeks local support from businesses and organizations wishing to match contributions from this grant. A \$300 donation will provide a free transmitter, plus a year's supply of batteries and bands, to an individual with Alzheimer's disease in need of Project Lifesaver in our community. We expect the demand to be greater than two families, so any support is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to enroll your loved one for free on this program in Vilas County, or if you would like to make a donation, please call James Galloway, Emergency Management Director, 715-479-3690 or jagall@co.vilas.wi.us or Joseph Fath, Chief Deputy 715-479-4441 or jofath@co.vilas.wi.us.