

Two Columbia County Sheriff's deputies and an Oregon State Police trooper were honored in Bend Wednesday, December 8 at the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association annual awards banquet.

Deputy David Peabody, Reserve Deputy Greg Brody and Trooper Justin Oxenrider were each awarded the statewide organization's Distinguished Action Award for their bravery and quick action that saved the life of A 38-year-old farm worker who had been seriously injured in a bull attack in June.

Back on June 27, Oxenrider was stopped by residents along Highway 30, who told him a bull was attacking a man in a field by 35510 Millard Road. Oxenrider was joined by Peabody and Brody who all observed Homero Cortez Ortega lying on the ground with stomach wounds and a large bull standing over him.

Oxenrider grabbed his patrol shotgun, Peabody and Brody took their patrol rifles, discussing how to get the bull away from Ortega.

But then shortly after approaching the wire fence, Ortega began to sit up in an effort to escape. The officers yelled at him to lay back down, but it was too late. Instantly, the bull attacked Ortega again, lifting him off the ground and tossing him "like a rag doll" 10 to 15 feet in the air. The officers opened fire on the bull, intending to get the bull to move away.

Despite hitting the farm animal with multiple bullets and buckshot, it continued to stand its ground. The officers made the decision to kill the animal and fired again, causing the animal to fall to the ground, as Brody made his way to the injured man and administered first aid, while summoning a Lifelight helicopter. Reserve Deputy Brody is a paramedic with the Columbia River Fire and Rescue District. He described the near complete evisceration of the victim as the worst injuries he has seen on a patient who was still alive when he arrived.

Lifelight transported the victim to a hospital where he later recovered. Mr. Ortega later credited the quick action of the officers with saving his life.

Sheriff Jeff Dickerson said the actions of the three officers were worthy of the state sheriffs' association's recognition. "I am so proud to serve the citizens of Columbia County with such dedicated individuals," he said. "The attendees at the banquet gave these three a standing ovation. They are the pride of Columbia County."