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Rep. Kitchens: Recognizes First Responder of the Year

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MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) was honored to recognize Mike Neal as the First Responder of the Year for the 1st Assembly District during Tuesday's Assembly floor session.

As a conservation warden for the Department of Natural Resources for almost 30 years, Mike has served the northeast region of the state with selfless dedication and professionalism.

DNR conservation wardens are credentialed law enforcement officers who enforce all natural resource and recreation safety laws, educate the public on conservation topics and provide law enforcement services at state parks, forests and trails. In addition to responding to natural disasters and public safety emergencies, they also assist other law enforcement agencies when requested.

The Wisconsin State Assembly established a program in 2019 where a first responder in each of the state's 99 Assembly districts is recognized with a First Responder of the Year award. While Rep. Kitchens received a number of worthy nominations from across the 1st Assembly District this year, he decided to select Mike because of his longevity and all of the extraordinary things he has accomplished during his impressive career.

Mike has saved numerous lives in the waters of Door County over the years. In December of 2020, Mike helped rescue 43 people from unstable ice off of Larson's Reef. Earlier that same year, he also saved four individuals who had an incident in Nicolet Bay with their kayaks and paddleboards.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg of what Mike has done over the decades to make

sure that all of us are safe, even in the most dangerous situations," Rep. Kitchens said. "We can always count on Mike to step up to the challenges of our area and be the best public servant possible. So many times he has put his own life on the line to ensure the safety of our local residents and visitors. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to Mike and all of Wisconsin's first responders who make such a large impact in our communities."