

**The Crisis Negotiators Association of Minnesota is seeking Negotiator of the Year nominees!**

Please submit your nominees for the Matt Ruge Negotiator of the Year award. The annual award is named after Officer Ruge of Burnsville PD who was tragically killed in the line of duty performing negotiator duties on February 18, 2024.

Officer Ruge joined the Burnsville Police Department in 2020, and quickly earned the reputation of “The Book”, referring to his persistent standard of always operating by the book as a Police Officer. Officer Ruge joined the department in the midst of the Covid pandemic, only to be quickly followed by the civil unrest in the summer of 2020. These uncertain times proved the Officer Ruge was a confident and self-disciplined officer who held himself to the highest standard. He was always viewed as a reliable and dependent partner. It was his meticulous attention to detail that set him apart from his partners. This finite attention to detail and striving to always be a helpful partner earned him positions on the department’s Crisis Negotiator teams, among other specialties. Officer Ruge exuded a calm presence during his negotiation tasks, always sought input from others, and strove to do his best. Even when he performed well, he never settled for that and constantly found areas for improvement.

On the night Officer Ruge was murdered, he was using this very skillset to the best he could, while negotiating with the man who would later selflessly murder him, Officer Elmstrand, and Firefighter Paramedic Finseth. Even after being shot, Officer Ruge ran into the barrage of gunfire to help extract Officer Elmstrand from the residence, while still being shot at. On the night he died, Officer Ruge acted selflessly and courageously. Officer Ruge is remembered by his team as a phenomenal crisis negotiator and represent the best of us.

The nominee you submit should demonstrate the finest that a negotiator has to offer. Please have all submissions in by May 1st. They should be emailed to info@cnamn.org.