

Agent offers helping hand after icy plunge

"I believe she may have saved my son's life."

~ Policyholder's father



The first thing that Brandon Beranek (left) thought to grab was his cell phone; the second was Sue's phone number.

by Paul Morin

In a dire emergency who's the first person you call?

One of **Agent Sue Mullen's** policyholders called her.

The policyholder, a young man named Brandon Beranek, was ice fishing from the cab of his truck one Saturday, alone, in sub-zero temperature, on a

lake 25 miles from Sue's home in Chippewa Falls, Wis. As he was driving to a new fishing site he hit a weak spot in the ice—and the truck began to sink. With the frigid water rising fast inside the cab the policyholder grabbed his cell phone before escaping, after which the truck hit the 5-foot bottom of the lake. Then he plunged back into the water to retrieve his insurance card with Sue's phone number on it.

"He panicked," Sue says. "He told me what happened and he had no idea what to do." She told him to call 911.

Sue arrived at the lake the same time the emergency responders did. Because emergency vehicles are not allowed to drive onto the ice, they gathered on the boat landing that was nearest the sunken truck, still more than a mile away, and by cell phone talked the freezing policyholder back to the boat landing.

While the policyholder was being examined in the ambulance, one of the emergency response team

approached Sue and asked, "Are you the lady he called before he called us?"

Still at the lake, with the policyholder now warming up in her car, Sue called several wrecking and recovery services until she found one that could supply divers. Then she drove the policyholder 25 miles to his home, waited for him to change clothes, then 25 miles back to the lake.

In an e-mail to Corporate Public Affairs, the father of the policyholder wrote, "I believe she may have saved my son's life. She has created State Farm customers for life, by her actions this weekend."

"It's something that anybody would do," Sue says. "State Farm agents really like taking care of their people, and I'm sure any State Farm agent in this situation would've done the same thing."

