



ST. TAMMANY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 11

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BOATER INJURED BY PROPELLER; OFF DUTY FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC RESCUES THE BOATER FROM THE RIVER AND ADMINISTERS CARE

At approximately 11:35am, Sunday, May 29, 2011 St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 11, St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office and Acadian Ambulance responded to the West Pearl River just north of I-59 for a boating accident. Fire District 11 personnel arrived at the boat launch and were taken to the bank of the river via a citizen's boat for an injured male. We were told by bystanders that the boater was thrown off of the boat and made attempts to climb aboard the boat while it spun in circles out of control. We were also told that while making an attempt to climb aboard the moving boat, the boater was struck by the boats propeller causing facial trauma and leaving him helpless in the middle of the river.

At the time of the incident, off duty St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1 (Slidell) Firefighter / Paramedic Jason Gaubert was on the river bank spending time with family and friends when he witnessed the incident. Without a second thought, Gaubert dove into the water and swam to the aid of the boater who was unconscious under the water; all while the boat still spun out of control in the middle of the river. Gaubert told fire district 11 personnel that it took him several dives under water to locate the boater. Gaubert then drug the boater to the bank of the river where he brought the patient back to consciousness and began to administer medical care with limited resources, all while awaiting additional help.

Paramedics and other fire district personnel said that with no doubt, the actions of Jason Gaubert are the sole reason why the boater is still alive. Fire District 11 Fire Operator / First Responder Sidney Anderson said "there's no doubt that if Jason wouldn't have done what he did the boater would have died in the river."

Once fire district 11 personnel arrived on scene, they began to administer advanced life support to the boater while Acadian EMS landed their Airmed (helicopter) nearby at the boat launch to transport the patient once he was stabilized. The boater was then transferred from the river bank via a St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office boat back to the boat launch where he was transferred via ambulance a short distance to the helicopter landing zone. Acadian EMS Airmed then transported the patient to University Hospital (trauma center) in New Orleans.

Additional Notes: The boater's current condition is not known at this time and additional patient information is not available due to patient confidentiality. The St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries were on scene and were handling the investigation.

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