

McClatchy Washington Bureau

 [Print This Article](#)

Posted on Wed, Feb. 11, 2009

Fresno officials use CPR to help keep man alive

Michael Doyle | McClatchy Newspapers

last updated: February 11, 2009 07:18:44 PM

WASHINGTON -- Quick-thinking Fresno County officials leaped to the rescue of a man in apparent cardiac arrest late Wednesday afternoon, keeping him alive with CPR until medics arrived.

Sheriff Margaret Mims performed chest compressions and Supervisor Judy Case did the breathing for the unresponsive adult male they found inside a crowded Capitol Hill subway station. It wasn't the first rescue for either woman -- Mims is trained in first aid, and Case is a registered nurse -- but it was definitely one of the more unexpected.

"They're heroes, man," Firebaugh City Manager Jose Ramirez said. "They saved his butt."

The lifesaving adventure capped a long day of lobbying for the Fresno County officials, who've been seeking federal aid for local projects. The so-called "One Voice" trip is now an annual affair, with Fresno County sending a record 41 public and private-sector representatives this week.

Officials spent the past three days asking for help with roads, bridges, emergency radios and more. Total federal aid requested: Some \$19 million. Restarting a man's heart: Priceless.

"In the big scope of things, this may be the most important thing I did on this entire trip," Case said early Wednesday evening.

This week's lobbying trip was fairly routine, until roughly 4 p.m. Wednesday. The delegation was finished with formal meetings for the day and had left the Cannon House Office Building for a short subway ride to the Hilton Garden Inn. There, they would be getting ready for an evening reception.

The Fresno delegation members were spread out along the escalator that took them underground to the Capitol South Metro station, across the street from Cannon. Darren Rose, a field representative for Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, and Jules Tuggles, an assistant to Supervisor Susan Anderson, happened to be near the lead.

Rose and Tuggles were thus among the first to find the 21-year-old man lying facedown on the ground, bleeding profusely from the mouth. Rose went to call 911,

and Tuggles began helping to organize the emergency response among gathering standers-by.

Mims arrived.

The career law enforcement officer has performed CPR before -- "I actually broke someone's ribs," Mims said -- and when she knelt at the man's side she knew to first check for a heartbeat. She felt for the carotid artery, in the neck.

There was no pulse.

"He was losing his color, and his pupils were fixed," Mims said.

The man was rolled onto his back. He appeared like he might be Hispanic, or perhaps Filipino. When his chest was exposed, Mims could see a scar, as if he had undergone surgery. Recalling what she could from her long-ago CPR class, Mims placed her hands in the center of the stranger's chest and began pressing.

Case arrived.

Just four weeks ago, as part of her ongoing nursing requirements, Case had taken her CPR recertification class. The rules have been changing. Now, rescuers are trained to compress the chest 100 times a minute. That's fast, especially since chests present a surprising amount of resistance.

Case, who has also served on ski patrols, began guiding Mims to the correct rate.

"She was a pretty good coach," Mims said. "She was telling me to pick up the pace, or slow down."

Tuggles managed to come up with a pocket face mask. Case affixed it and delivered breaths. Even with a face mask, it is a daunting thing to place your mouth on that of a stranger and breathe for them. Case did so, four times.

Around them, some spectators prayed. Some commuters walked on past: it was another person's problem. Frank Franco, an Army veteran who works for the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, said he looked at the young man lying on the ground. Then, Franco flashed back on his time in Vietnam, where he did two tours.

After 10 or 15 minutes, District of Columbia medics arrived. By then, Mims and Case said, the young man appeared to be breathing again on his own. The two women stepped back and observed as the medics attached two pads to the man's chest and abdomen and deliver one electrical shock. The medics established an IV line, in case they needed to push drugs.

Then, everyone went on their way: the medics to the hospital with the revived stranger, and the Fresno County visitors to their hotel, for an evening reception where they would have more to talk about than roads and bridges and economic

stimulus packages.

"I'm really hoping he survives," Case said.

The fate of the patient could not be confirmed early Wednesday evening.

McClatchy Newspapers 2009