



Meritorious award  
*Sponsored by the SGA Safety & Health Committee*  
*July 2011 – June 2012*

***Anthony Hutchinson***  
Gainesville Regional Utilities

It is rare to have an opportunity to save someone's life once in a career, but to do it twice is even more extraordinary. Anthony Hutchinson, Field Service Technician, certainly qualifies as a unique and special person, and on two separate occasions he has intervened in potentially life threatening situations.

**Gainesville Regional Utilities, Field Services Division, Energy Delivery, coordinates dog bite prevention training on a periodic basis. On March 22, 2011, Bulli Ray, a private company specializing in dog bite prevention training, was contracted to perform a training seminar for City staff at the Martin Luther King Center. Approximately eighty attendees from numerous divisions of the City attended the training, Mr. Anthony Hutchinson, Field Service Technician, was also in attendance. Little did Mr. Hutchinson or anyone else realize while attending the training how soon he would implement what was learned that day.**

On April 11, 2011, Mr. Hutchinson was alone and performing an otherwise routine utility reconnection order in northeast Gainesville. It should be noted however, that utility work is never routine. The location of the utility meter he was activating was approximately three feet from a chain-link fence restraining two aggressive pit bulls in a nearby back yard. With focus and determination, Mr. Hutchinson performed his duties while cognizant of the two pit bulls adjacent to him, barking viciously through the chain link fence. Unbeknownst to Mr. Hutchinson, a third pit bull in a neighboring house charged through a front porch screen in an attempt to join the commotion. An open-ended fence was all that separated him from the charging pit bull.

A teenage girl from the neighboring home managed to take control of her dog before it realized it could have rounded the fence to attack Mr. Hutchinson. The teenage girl escorted the dog back to its home, and commenced to scold the dog while returning to her home. The dog then turned on the teenager and began attacking her by leaping and biting at her head area. In a defensive posture, the teenager flailed

***(Anthony Hutchinson continued)***

with her arms to ward off the attacking dog. Mr. Hutchinson heard the agonizing screams as the girl exited the front door of her home in an attempt to escape the attacking dog. He then witnessed the dog lock his jaws around the arm of the girl. As he approached, he brandished pepper spray.



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An adult male from the home attempted to provide assistance by striking the dog on top of its head in an effort to pry the dog's mouth open; he hoped the dog would release the girl. Mr. Hutchinson ran toward the attack, and instructed the gentleman to stop hitting the dog. The advice given was a result of the recent Bulli Ray seminar, where Mr. Hutchinson had learned that a canine's teeth are driven deeper into the arm with each strike to the dog's head. The direction was intended to calm the situation as well as reduce risk of injury to the striker, who may have been bitten also. Mr. Hutchinson considered the use of pepper spray; however he recognized the man, dog, and teenager all would be incapacitated if the pepper spray were to have been discharged. Instead, with quick decision and swift action, he placed himself in harm's way to engage the dog with his bare hands, reaching in and grasping the dog's collar with one hand and the dog's throat with the other while lifting the dog off the ground. Applying pressure to both points, the dog was subdued until it released the victim.

Mr. Hutchinson subsequently pinned the dog to the ground until such time as another neighbor approached to help. A secure exchange of custody was made, and the dog was safely secured in its cage within the home. He subsequently called GRU dispatch to request an ambulance for the teenager. Mr. Hutchinson has twice exemplified leadership in taking charge of a volatile and dramatic situation. The first incident involved Mr. Hutchinson and a co-worker saving a choking infant in 2009. The second, and most recent, event involved this dog attack where Mr. Hutchinson demonstrated heroic actions by engaging and mitigating a dangerous animal attack. He placed the safety of others before his own personal safety. He successfully implemented safety training provided by his employer to mitigate an animal attack and save a choking baby. And to answer the question, yes, lightning can strike the same place twice!