



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release

From: Corporal Wendy McGinnis
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Re: Sheriff Al Nienhuis Meets County's 5% Budget Reduction Target

Date: September 9, 2011

Sheriff Al Nienhuis is pleased to announce that continued efforts to find cost savings within the Sheriff's Office budget have resulted in successfully meeting two significant goals: (1) Returning \$500,000 to the County from the operation of the Jail, and (2) Achieving the County's requested goal of a 5% contribution, or \$2,077,775, towards the County's budget deficit.

The following are some of the cost-saving actions that were taken to help accomplish these goals:

- Third year of wage freezes for employees, including the Sheriff.
- Eliminated the following positions:
 - Two Marine Deputies (sworn)
 - Current Marine Corporal now assisted by **Volunteer** Reserve Marine Deputies
 - Two Public Service Aides (civilian)
 - Created **Volunteer** Public Service Aide program
 - One Director (civilian)
 - Duties assumed by existing Bureau Chief
 - One Administrative Sergeant (sworn)
 - Duties were transferred to an existing civilian employee and the Sergeant was reassigned to the street to fill a vacant Patrol position
- Downgraded the PIO position from Sergeant to Corporal
- **Reduced the cost to operate the County Jail** by almost 1.5 million dollars annually between reductions to the budget and increased revenue generated by the facility
- Eliminated the private breathalyzer contracts (now handled by Jail staff)
- Reduced employee health insurance benefit (HRA)
- Eliminated the formal accreditation program

- Negotiated a new, lower cost fuel system contract
- Florida Retirement System reductions (state mandated)
- Negotiated Premium Refund with Health Insurance Carrier
- Changing to Self-Funded Health Insurance Plan to accomplish a 0% increase in our 2012 insurance premiums and reduce long-term costs
- Changed to a lower cost employee dental insurance plan
- Worker's Compensation Dividend Check
- Estimated return of 2011 revenues, fees and unspent budget funds to the County of over \$2 Million dollarsⁱ (\$400,000 more than originally anticipated)
- Assumed Responsibility for Spring Hill Fire Police by creating **Volunteer** Sheriff's Traffic Aide (STA) program with plans to expand the program county-wide

The cuts demonstrated in the Sheriff's 2012 budget follow two consecutive years of reducing costs, including the reorganization of the Sheriff's Command Staff, the closure of the Sheriff's Sub-Stations, the elimination of the DARE program and the privatization of the courthouse security function. We've extended the life of our vehicles and reduced vehicle maintenance costs by aggressively managing our fleet program. We realigned our response zones to maximize patrol coverage and increase our first line supervision without adding any additional supervisors or personnel, all at a lower cost. Since FY2008-2009, **the Sheriff's Office has eliminated 43 positions**. We have focused heavily on recruiting and training **volunteers** to help us provide the level of service the community deserves and has come to expect from the Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's proposed budget also includes the funding necessary to operate the County-wide Consolidated 9-1-1 Communications Center, Emergency Management and the County Jail, all of which **significantly reduced costs for the County** and increased efficiencies in the operations. The Sheriff's inmate work program will provide over 120,000 hours of labor in 2012 cleaning roadways, medians, facilities (including the County Jail) and various other labor-intensive tasks for the County. Comparing these hours to the cost of hiring personnel (at minimum wage plus benefits), **the value to the County exceeds \$1.1 million dollars**. Having the Sheriff manage the operation of the Hernando County Jail is saving significant taxpayer dollars while improving the conditions and opportunities for the inmates and the community.

Sheriff Nienhuis said, "We at the Sheriff's Office see and experience the effects of our weak economy as much as any organization. We have a strong desire to be a team player when it comes to cutting costs. We must balance this desire with the reality that we must respond to labor intensive events like death investigations, small plane crashes and criminal acts that require an immediate, and often prolonged, response that can use hundreds of hours of unscheduled resources. We also experience an increased demand for our services when other departments are unavailable or unable to respond in a timely manner.

I truly believe this budget balances both public safety and cost cutting, helping the County accomplish their budget goal without sacrificing our public safety responsibilities to the community."

ⁱ Much of this figure can be attributed to our Management Team closely monitoring our overtime budget. Events between now and the end of the fiscal year would negatively affect our projected returned funds. Manpower intensive events such as homicides, significant weather events, or other major events would lessen our projection.