



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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### Media Release

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**From:** Corporal Wendy McGinnis  
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**Re:** Electronic Pawn Uploads Expected to Assist Law Enforcement in Catching More Criminals

**Date:** January 06, 2012

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Pawn activity in Hernando County is up 39 percent from 2010, and it is projected to increase to nearly 45 percent during the 2012 calendar year. With 28 pawn shops and secondhand dealers in Hernando County submitting original transaction forms, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office receives over 31,500 pawn slips each year. For over a decade, clerks at the Hernando County Sheriff's Office have been responsible for entering all pawn slips into the agency's database. This is very time consuming and could result in a several week delay in inputting the transaction into the database -- leaving criminal activity undetected for up to eight weeks.

In an effort to be more efficient, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office is working with local pawn shops and secondhand dealers to have the actual businesses electronically enter their data into a Sheriff's Office database. The number of locations now submitting the data electronically has risen from six in 2010 to ten in 2012. The original pawn slips are still transported to the Sheriff's Office, as they are a permanent document that is maintained for records.

It is the goal of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office to eventually get every pawn shop and secondhand dealer involved in electronically submitting their pawn slips; however, many do not have the equipment available to electronically submit pawn slips. The Sheriff's Office has the ability to supply them with the software, if they have the hardware available. Recently, the Sheriff's Office has begun using seized or retired laptops to help other businesses get on line. As the Sheriff's Office supplies each pawn shop and secondhand dealer with the proper equipment, they are then required to submit their pawn slip electronically and upload their transactions within 24 hours of a purchase. By doing so, it greatly increases the chance of quickly locating stolen property. This is crucial, because pawn shops and secondhand dealers are only required to hold the items they purchase for a very limited time. Once the allotted time passes they can sell or "scrap" the items they purchased.

It has been recognized in numerous jewelry theft cases that the suspect is often a family member, family friend, or somehow acquainted with the victim. During the investigation, when names are mentioned to investigators, a suspect's name can be researched for pawn or secondhand dealer transactions. Having the uploaded information from the pawn shops and secondhand dealers within 24 hours will help to quickly identify a suspect and will greatly increase the chances of law enforcement recovering stolen property before it is sold or scrapped.

“Solving burglary and theft cases requires a lot of good old fashioned police work,” said Sheriff Al Nienhuis. “Historically, that required flipping through pawn slips or waiting for them to be entered into a database. If we can use technology to speed up that process to almost real time, with little or no cost to taxpayers, being a thief in Hernando County will become much more difficult.”