



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: UPDATE - Operation Safe Surrender

Date: May 1, 2017

Update

On Saturday, 23 individuals with (non-violent) Hernando County misdemeanor warrants went to the Hernando County Courthouse in hopes of getting a favorable resolution from one of the two judges through Operation Safe Surrender. All but one individual left very pleased with the outcome.

Judge Kristie Ruppe and Judge Kurt Hitzemann both participated in Hernando County's first Operation Safe Surrender, providing favorable resolutions to defendants who chose to take advantage of the opportunity.

The results of the four-hour operation are as follows:

- 22 Warrants Recalled
 - 14 Failure to Appear Warrants
 - 4 Violation of Probation Warrants
 - 1 Child Support Warrant
- 1 Plea Deal Accepted
- 2 Warrants Dismissed
- 1 Pasco County Warrant Served
 - This individual was arrested and taken to jail (we are unable to dissolve or dismiss warrants from other jurisdictions).

After having his warrant recalled, one male stated, "The burden is lifted."

"This event was a huge success. Normally, when we run across someone with a warrant, law enforcement must book that person in the county jail. There are almost 2 dozen people who were able to get their cases resolved without having to experience the booking process

because of this program. This method is safer for law enforcement, more convenient for the person with the warrant, and less expensive for taxpayers. Those citizens who have criminal or traffic issues who missed this event are encouraged to contact the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Warrants Unit or the Clerk of Court to get their cases resolved. It is never too late to proactively resolve these issues," said Sheriff Al Nienhuis.

Of the 23 individuals who participated in this event, there were 13 males and 10 females.

Original Information

Sheriff Al Nienhuis is pleased to announce the Hernando County Sheriff's Office first-ever, **Operation Safe Surrender**.

Operation Safe Surrender was introduced in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2005, by U.S. Marshal Pete Elliott. After losing a fellow officer in June of 2000, Elliott designed the program in hopes that fewer law enforcement officers would be hurt or killed in the line of duty.

Since the inception of **Operation Safe Surrender**, over 34,000 individuals have surrendered voluntarily throughout the United States.

Several law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Florida have participated in events similar to this and have experienced great success, saving wanted persons time, money, resources, and embarrassment.

Operation Safe Surrender allows individuals with **non-violent** misdemeanor warrants a chance to have their warrant reviewed, and potentially resolved, instead of being arrested. Additionally, **Operation Safe Surrender** is not an amnesty program, but will offer favorable consideration from the Court.

Representatives from numerous agencies are working together to coordinate this event. These agencies are the Hernando County Sheriff's Office, Hernando County Court, Hernando County State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Hernando County Clerk of Circuit Court.

There are currently 650 individuals with a total of 677 non-violent misdemeanor warrants (retail theft, unlicensed animal, trespass, etc.), who qualify for and will be invited to attend this event.

Hernando County Operation Safe Surrender

- **Date**
 - Saturday, April, 29, 2017
- **Time**
 - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Location**
 - Hernando County Courthouse
20 N. Main Street

First Floor – Courtroom D
Brooksville, FL 34601

- **Important Information**
 - Please bring a valid photo ID
 - No weapons or children are allowed
 - Fines and/or fees may be reduced and collected at the event.

If anyone has any questions, please contact the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Warrants Section at 352-797-3654.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.