



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
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**Re:** Proactive Efforts Uncover Potential Dog Fighting Operation

**Date:** May 2, 2017

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On Wednesday, 04-26-17, Hernando County Sheriff's COPPS Deputies Spooner, McLaughlin, and Deso, along with Animal Enforcement Officer (AEO) Rowe and a representative from Hernando County Code Enforcement, went to the south Brooksville community to identify potential code violations.

The purpose of this joint operation was to educate citizens in the community regarding code violations and to issue warnings, if needed. Citizens were also given information on anti-tethering laws and other information about how to be responsible pet owners.

While conducting proactive patrol at the end of Leonard Street, the deputies and AEO observed eight dogs either tethered with heavy chains or confined in make-shift kennels on a vacant property.

A thorough check of the GIS map revealed the property is owned by Hernando County.

The dogs were removed from the property by AEO Rowe, assisted by Public Safety Technician Lewis, and then transported to the Hernando County Animal Services Shelter. The make-shift kennels were destroyed and chains impounded (and weighed). One of the chains weighed slightly over 10 pounds.

Deputies believe the dogs were possibly being used as bait-dogs in a dog fighting operation. It is unknown who owns/owned the dogs as they were located on county owned property.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, "The Sheriff's Office is in the process of filling our Community Policing Unit positions that were cut during the downturn in the economy. One of their first projects is to address many of the quality of life issues in the south Brooksville community. My office is committed to working with the community and the Board of County Commissioners to address all the concerns of this longstanding Hernando County

neighborhood. Commissioner Champion and I, in fact, recently hosted a Town Hall meeting and were encouraged by the community support for our increased involvement in this area of the county.”

All dogs became property of the HCAS Shelter on 04-30-17. Persons interested in adopting one or more of them can contact HCAS at 352-796-5062.

Hernando County Sheriff's COPPS deputies will have an increased presence in the south Brooksville Community in an effort to partner with citizens to reduce crime and to potentially root out dog fighting.

#### **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.**