



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Arrests Made in Hernando Beach Volunteer Fire Department Fraud Investigation

Date: September 29, 2017

As a result of a seven-month investigation stemming from allegations of misappropriation of funds at the Hernando Beach Volunteer Fire Department (HBVFD), detectives with the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Economic Crimes Unit, working closely with members of State Attorney Brad King's office, have made three arrests.

It should be noted, earlier this year, the Hernando Beach Volunteer Fire Department was dissolved. Hernando County Fire/Rescue now provides services to Hernando Beach residents.

Today, detectives effected arrest warrants on the following **three former Hernando Beach Volunteer Fire Chiefs**.

Current City of Brooksville Fire Chief and former HBVFD Chief **David Freda W/M** was arrested at 10:30 p.m. at the 7-11 at County Line Road and US 19 as a result of a traffic stop.

Current City of Brooksville Fire Captain and former HBVFD Chief **David Murdock W/M** was arrested from his secondary place of employment, Bayfront Health Dade City.

Current FEMA employee and former HBVFD Chief **Travis Morris W/M** was arrested from the Hernando County Emergency Operations Center.

Charges are as follows:

- **David Freda**
- Organized Fraud More than \$50,000 (1st Degree Felony)
- Bond - \$25,000

- **David Murdock**
- Organized Fraud More than \$50,000 (1st Degree Felony)
- Bond - \$25,000

- **Travis Morris**
- Organized Fraud More than \$20,000 (2nd Degree Felony)
- Bond - \$15,000.

Detectives ask anyone with first-hand information or evidence that may be pertinent to this case, please contact the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Economic Crimes Unit at 352-754-6830.

If you would like to remain anonymous – Please call Hernando County Crime Stoppers at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> . You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$1,000 cash!

In order to maintain the integrity of the investigation, no further information can be released at this time. At the discretion of investigators, additional information will be released as the investigation proceeds.

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.