



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Kirk J. Turner
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Re: HCSO's Civilian Mounted Unit Competes in the First Responder Games

Date: 06/13/2018

Each year, the State of Florida hosts the annual First Responder Games. The Games, held in various locations in the state, allow qualified participants to compete in 30 different sport categories including archery, football, practical pistol, and equestrian. Each category contains related events for the sport where first, second, and third place are awarded a gold, silver, or bronze medal, respectively. The First Responder Games require participants to be either sworn officers, firefighters, military, posse members, or members of any first response search teams.

As many of you know, the HCSO has a Civilian Mounted Unit (CMU) which provides assistance to the agency in many ways, including search and rescue and by attending community events. Two of our CMU volunteers (Mike and Sandy Nickerson) were granted permission to participate in the First Responder Games as representatives of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office. Mike and Sandy are experienced riders who have been members of the Civilian Mounted Unit for several years. They frequently compete in other competitions to include Mounted Shooting.

From June 5 through June 7 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Mike and Sandy participated in the Equestrian competition, taking home no less than four medals. The competition included the following events: Barrel Race, Gymkhana, Jumping, Equitation Dressage, Team Ride and Day/Night Obstacles. Mike won a gold medal for first place in Gymkhana, silver for second in Barrel Racing, and bronze for third in Night Obstacles. Sandy won silver for second place in Dressage, and she just missed medaling for Barrel Racing, coming in 4th.

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.