



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Back to School Traffic Safety

Date: August 8, 2018

“Over the next few weeks the activity around our schools will increase dramatically as school personnel, children, and parents settle into another school year. The activity will peak on August 13, the first day of school, and will be high through the end of August. It will be important for all drivers to leave at least 15 to 30 minutes early to avoid the extreme danger associated with being distracted or frustrated because that driver is late for work or school. Both parents and children will be extremely distracted and could be unpredictable, so everyone must use extra caution to avoid a tragedy. Keeping our youngest and most vulnerable citizens safe, as they make their way to and from school, is everyone's responsibility. Toward that end, my deputies will be out in force, ensuring that everyone stays focused on what is really important during their commute, getting to their destination safely,” said Sheriff Al Nienhuis.

The first week of school consistently produces increased pedestrian traffic, as well as vehicular traffic, on the Hernando County roadways. **Drivers should be mindful of the following:**

- Many students will be walking and/or riding bicycles to school along the sidewalks and county roadways
- Parents should ensure that children who ride bicycles wear properly fitting helmets
- Expect heavy traffic back-ups in school zones
- Parents should have children ride school buses when bus routes are available – alleviating unnecessary traffic in school zones
- Motorists should avoid school zones if at all possible
- Be patient and drive carefully
- The first few weeks of school are always extra busy so leave plenty of time to travel
- When a school bus stops and the red lights are flashing – traffic approaching from **either direction** is required to stop

- Reduce or eliminate any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings
- Put down the phone
- Do not text and drive
- If you have any type of emergency or get into an accident, call 9-1-1 immediately
 - o tell the operator the location of the emergency
 - o answer all of the questions appropriately
 - o emergency vehicles are dispatched immediately – answering the dispatcher’s questions does not delay the response.

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.