



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Rally in Downtown Brooksville - Passionate and Peaceful

Date: June

Sheriff Al Nienhuis is pleased to report that the events held in downtown Brooksville and at the Hernando County Courthouse this afternoon and evening were peaceful, as promised by event organizers.

Members of the Sheriff's Command Staff met with event organizers in the days prior to the event to discuss the event, the safety of everyone involved in the event and anyone who may be in the area, and the HCSO's expectation that the event would be conducted peacefully and legally.

Individuals began arriving at the Hernando County Courthouse and at the Hernando Park in the City of Brooksville just after 3 p.m. At 5 p.m., when the organized event at the Courthouse officially started, there were between 200 and 250 people in attendance.

During the event, several individuals became passionate about their feelings; however, cooler heads prevailed. There were no incidents of physical violence or attempts to damage to property.

As the crowd began to disperse, one individual in attendance attempted to incite an altercation. Unbeknownst to the suspect, deputies witnessed the event and proceeded to attempt to make contact with him.

As deputies were still in the process of approaching the suspect, the suspect pulled a machete from his pants. The suspect fled from deputies while brandishing the machete. Deputies ordered the suspect to stop running and drop the machete, to which he failed to comply.

A deputy deployed his Taser in order to bring the situation under control. The suspect was taken into custody before anyone was injured.

The suspect is identified as: **David Allen Howell DOB/02-05-1986, of Zolpho Springs, Florida.**

Howell was charged as follows:

- Resist Arrest w/o Violence
- Improper Exhibition of Dangerous Weapon
- Bond - \$2,000.

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, ran unopposed in 2016, and remains accountable to them.