



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: HCSO Aviation Unit Locates Suicidal Man

Date: August 24, 2020

On 08-22-20 just after 8 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to a residence near Veteran's Park in Spring Hill regarding a male threatening to commit suicide.

Upon arrival, deputies met with the caller in front of the residence. The caller told deputies the (suicidal) male had climbed out of his bedroom window and fled from the residence on foot, headed eastbound.

A physical description was obtained, and numerous patrol deputies and a K-9 team responded to the area to search for the male.

As deputies searched for the male in crisis, one deputy remained at the residence to gather information.

The original caller explained the male, who had an alcohol problem, was distraught over recently losing his job. When the caller returned from work around 7 p.m., he found the male to be drinking beer. The male stated that he'd been drinking since about 3 p.m. The caller estimated that he'd consumed approximately 15 (12-ounce) cans of beer. The caller asked the male if he was OK. It was at this time that the male stated he "wanted to die today."

The male continued to make statements about suicide and made several attempts to locate a firearm or another type of weapon inside the residence.

The male then retreated to his bedroom for a short time. Upon exiting his bedroom, the male told the caller that he had "cut" himself. The caller then contacted 9-1-1.

As deputies searched by ground, the sergeant on scene requested the assistance of the HCSO Aviation Unit.

Deputy Jeff Andrews and K-9 Chase began tracking the male from the location where he was last observed. The track eventually led west, across a portion of the old Spring Hill Golf Course and to Coronet Court.

At approximately 9:10 p.m., Tactical Flight Officer (TFO) B.J. Hart observed the male on the golf course, just west of Coronet Court. He was lying down, not moving.

Deputy Pilot R. McLaughlin and TFO Hart directed ground units to the male's location where deputies placed him into protective custody.

The male told deputies he did not remember how he got to the golf course. He said the last thing he remembered was drinking beer at his residence and then being awoken by deputies. Deputies observed superficial scratches on the male's arms that did not require medical attention.

The male was placed under the Baker Act and transported to a receiving facility.

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 was re-elected in 2020. Sheriff Nienhuis remains accountable to the people of Hernando County.