



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: HCSO Aircraft Makes Unplanned Landing During Patrol Flight

Date: July 30, 2021

On 07-29-21 at approximately 10 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies, with assistance from the Aviation and K-9 Units, were in the Brooksville area attempting to locate a wanted person.

During this time, the HCSO Aviation Unit "Air-1," flown by Deputy Pilot Roy McLaughlin and Tactical Flight Officer B.J. Hart, advised the dispatcher they were having issues and would be attempting to land.

Deputy Pilot McLaughlin immediately left the heavily populated area of Brooksville, flying toward an area where he could safely land the aircraft without endangering citizens.

At approximately 10:15 p.m., Deputy Pilot McLaughlin landed the aircraft in a field near Brooksville Elementary School.

Hernando County Fire and Emergency Services responded to the scene to check on McLaughlin and Hart. Both men were treated on scene and released.

The aircraft, an OH-58, remained on scene overnight. Early this morning the Aviation Mechanic and Chief Pilot responded back to the scene to determine the cause of the malfunction. If repairs cannot be made on scene, the aircraft will be trailered back to the HCSO Hangar.

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.