



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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

### Media Release

---

**From:** Michael Terry  
Deputy PIO, 352-797-3608

**Re:** CJSTC Approves Creation of Law Enforcement Academy for Hernando County

**Date:** August 13, 2021

---

The Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission met on 08-12-2021 in Ponte Vedra Beach where commissioners unanimously approved the Hernando County Sheriff's Office application to create its own Law Enforcement Academy.

The name of the newly formed academy will be Hernando County Criminal Justice Academy. The academy will be housed at Nature Coast Technical High School in Brooksville during weekday evening hours.

The law enforcement academy was created in partnership with the Hernando County School District and Suncoast Technical Education Center -- a division of Hernando Adult Education.

The HCSO and school district saw a need for the program in Hernando County and have been working for months to navigate the extensive application process.

Previously, Hernando County residents interested in attending a law enforcement academy, with plans on becoming a law enforcement officer, had to attend either classes at Withlacoochee Technical College in Inverness or the Dade City campus of Pasco/Hernando State College.

At Thursday's meeting, Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast and Hernando County Commissioner Jeff Holcomb each spoke in support of the creation of a law enforcement academy in Hernando County.

Sgt. Cinda Lillibridge, a 25-year veteran of the HCSO, has been named director of the law enforcement academy.

“Helping develop a local academy that fosters diversity and inclusion for our community is the pinnacle of my career,” said Sgt. Lillibridge. “I’m excited to help mold the next generation of law enforcement officers from the very beginning of their career. It’s a responsibility that I don’t take lightly.”

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, “This new and local law enforcement academy will enhance our ability to recruit members of our local community. Whether it is a young person starting out, or someone who wants to change careers, this will allow us to continue to employ the best of the best. I would encourage anyone with a stellar background, who wants to make a real difference in their community, to quickly apply for the inaugural September 2021 academy.”

Applications for the inaugural academy are currently being accepted. For more information, contact the Suncoast Technical Education Center at 352-797-7018.

#### **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.