



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Tampering with Fire Suppression Device - Beacon Theater

Date: July 15, 2013

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office is seeking assistance from the public in identifying the persons responsible for tampering with numerous fire suppression devices in the Beacon Theaters, located at 12961 Cortez Blvd. in Brooksville, on Saturday evening.

On 07-13-13 at approximately 11:45 p.m., theaters # 1 and # 4 were relatively crowded at Beacon Theaters for the final showings that evening. The fire alarm sounded. Simultaneously, unknown persons removed the fire extinguishers from their cases and activated them inside the crowded theaters. At the same time, the sprinklers in the hallway were tripped.

As soon as the fire alarm sounded, all guests began to exit the building via the emergency exits. All theater staff quickly began to check all theaters to ensure that all persons were out of each theater. During the "melee" of everyone evacuating the building, the suspects were able to exit the building undetected.

Hernando County Fire Rescue responded and did a complete sweep of the premises. They determined that there was never any fire present in any theater or in the building as a whole.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, "This incident, at first blush, may seem like a childhood prank. The reality is, however, that these suspects cost this business a lot of money and put many lives at risk. I certainly hope that any witnesses to this event come forward, so these individuals can be held accountable."

Detectives are asking anyone that observed anyone or anything suspicious inside or outside the Beacon Theaters on Saturday, 07-13-13, to please call the Hernando County Sheriff's

Office immediately. **If you want to remain anonymous – Please call Hernando County Crime Stoppers at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernadosheriff.org/Tips> . You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$1,000 cash!**

Preliminary estimates of property damage to the business are in excess of \$20,000.