



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Michael Terry
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Re: Hernando County Detention Center Passes Annual Inspection

Date: April 9, 2021

Sheriff Al Nienhuis is pleased to report that on 03-11-2021 the Hernando County Detention Center successfully passed its annual Florida Model Jail Standards Inspection, drawing high praise from inspectors from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. This is the eleventh consecutive inspection that the facility has passed while being operated by the Hernando County Sheriff's Office.

The Florida Model Jail Standards (FMJS) are the statutorily mandated minimum standards that jails across Florida must meet to ensure the constitutional rights of those incarcerated are upheld. Prior to 1996, the Florida Department of Corrections was responsible for the standards and inspection process for local county jails through the Office of the Inspector General.

Legislation was passed in 1996 that gave the authority of inspections to the local level. This change required the Florida Sheriffs Association and Florida Association of Counties to appoint individuals to serve on a Committee that would govern standards that local jails must comply with.

Taken over by the Hernando County Sheriff's Office in August of 2010, this annual inspection of both detention and medical operations ensures that the Hernando County Detention Center and Sheriff's Office staff meet or exceed the minimum performance standards to operate a constitutional jail in the state of Florida.

The Inspection Team, led by outside law enforcement agencies, scrutinized both the conditions and policies of the Detention Center, continually praising daily operations and found all to be well above minimum standards.

Twenty different areas were inspected to include housing, kitchen, medical, programs and sanitation. Inmate disciplinary actions and reports were also examined. Both inmates and staff were interviewed at length for an independent view of daily operations.

The lead inspector wrote in the final report, “The facility is maintained well, and COVID protocols are in place. The staff takes pride in their job performance, and the facility is inspection ready. We would like to thank you and your staff for the assistance provided during this inspection and the professionalism they displayed. Thank you again and feel free to let us know if we can further assist. Again, congratulations on passing your Annual FMJS Facility Inspection.”

“Our staff ensures that we are inspection-ready at all times. The citizens of Hernando County can be very proud of the efforts of the men and women who operate the Hernando County Detention Center because of their belief of the “inspection-ready philosophy,” said Captain Andrew Batchelder.

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.