



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: HCSO Aviation Deputies Assist Pilot in Distress

Date: April 25, 2024

On 04-25-24 just after 1 a.m., Deputy/Pilot S. Kling and Deputy/Pilot R. McLaughlin were at the Sheriff's Hangar completing paperwork when they heard (on an aviation frequency) what they believed to be a pilot in distress.

The pilot, on an incoming aircraft, was unable to get the runway lights to turn on.

Deputy/Pilot Kling immediately responded to the HCSO aircraft, which was sitting on the helipad, and attempted to turn the runway lights on for the incoming aircraft. Deputy/Pilot Kling was also unable to turn the lights on.

The incoming pilot seemed to be growing increasingly distressed, as he did not know how he was going to be able to land his aircraft without the use of the runway lights.

Deputies Kling and McLaughlin notified the incoming pilot, via radio, they would launch and use the "Night-Sun" on their aircraft (Air-1) to illuminate the runway. Their hope was that the incoming pilot would at least be able to see the numbers and the touchdown zone and be able to safely land his aircraft.

Deputies Kling and McLaughlin flew out to the runway in question, positioned the HCSO aircraft about 500 feet south of the touchdown zone and utilized the Night-Sun to guide the pilot.

Thankfully, the incoming pilot was able to land his aircraft safely.

Authorities at the airport checked the runway lights and report they are fully operational at this time.

“The worst feeling in the world amongst aviators is being in the air and believing that you will not be able to get on the ground safely. This is an example of a deputy being in the right place, at the right time, allowing this rightfully-concerned pilot to get home to his loved ones.” – Sheriff Al Nienhuis