



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Florida Sheriffs Task Force "Operation Breaking Chains" Announces Significant Results to Help Stop Human Trafficking

On Thursday, July 22, 2021, the Florida Sheriffs Association (FSA) Task Force released the results of Operation Breaking Chains, a strategic initiative in 16 Florida counties that focused on reducing human trafficking throughout the state and prosecuting those responsible for trafficking individuals. During this month-long operation, 29 victims were recovered, 31 traffickers were identified, and a total of 363 arrests took place during the Task Force's "Operation Breaking Chains."



"Amplifying the safety on our roads and waterways is crucial for all Floridians, including our children, and those who visit the Sunshine State," said FSA President and Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz. "The dedicated enforcement of state laws that deal with businesses suspected of human trafficking and online operations will help to keep us all safe."

The following are the statewide totals:

- **16** total Sheriff's Offices participated in the month-long operation.
- **29** victims recovered
- **31** traffickers identified
- **4** traffickers arrested
- **363** interdiction stops made both highway and waterway
- **4** victims rescued for interdiction stops

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- **Over 1,000** man-hours doing knock and talks at multiple business locations
- **363** total arrests
- **7,591** social media and sign messages distributed
- **33** non-government community-based organizations assisted during the operation

For Flagler County, the FCSO made 13 arrests in a two-day operation, which included a variety of prostitution, narcotics, and firearm-related offenses. This operation focused on individuals soliciting prostitution services online on websites specifically utilized for prostitution advertisements, suspected prostitutes’ transporters and handlers, as well as subjects who are attempting to procure sexual services from these individuals.



This county-wide operation successfully led to the discovery and interception of a victim of Human Trafficking. SIU has turned the individual over to the care of HSI, who has initiated the process of providing the victim with a variety of services and assistance to be able to keep them away from their human trafficker. That investigation is ongoing.

“We partnered with the FSA for this state-wide operation, which led to the recovery of drugs, firearms, and the rescue of a victim of human trafficking.” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “These are not victimless crimes and we will continue to work to end human trafficking, prostitution, and drugs in Flagler County. I want to thank our Special Investigations Unit, Homeland Security Investigations, and our PACE team for their incredible work during this operation.”

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