



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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FCSO Employees Honored During Awards Ceremony

BUNNELL, Fla. — Employees who saved the lives of suicidal subjects; took down drug dealers; and solved lengthy investigations involving scams, nursing fraud, and sex offenses are among those who were honored during the Flagler County Sheriff's Office's 2025 Third Quarter Awards Ceremony held on Oct. 30 at the Flagler County Sheriff's Operations Center.

Sheriff Rick Staly awarded multiple Life Saving Awards to employees for their roles in saving the lives of others. He also presented a Sheriff's Citation, Unit Citations, Certificates of Commendation and Appreciation, and other awards to employees and citizens as part of the ceremony.

"We have an amazing team here at the Flagler County Sheriff's Office," said Sheriff Staly. "I am honored to be able to recognize these outstanding men and women who selflessly serve and protect the citizens of Flagler County. They exemplify the best of the best."

Three employees received employee of the month recognition and 17 were recognized for reaching years of service milestones from five to 20 years.

Below is a summary of each award winner and why they received an award.

SHERIFF'S CITATION — Nikki Smith

Nikki Smith is the agency's payroll and grants accountant. In addition to paying employees, she also researches grant opportunities, writes funding proposals, and ensures compliance with award requirements. Smith works countless hours, often around the clock, to meet tight deadlines so Flagler County is at the top of the list to receive funding. She has secured more than \$1.6 million in state and

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federal funds that will be used in our community for traffic enforcement and safety, purchasing advanced technological equipment, removing narcotics and other illegal drugs, enforcement of immigration laws, and providing mental health resiliency training. Her knowledge and dedication directly benefit the agency and the residents of Flagler County. She is an outstanding employee who exemplifies the mission, vision, and values of the Flagler County Sheriff's Office.

LIFE SAVING AWARD — Sergeant Carmine Celico

On July 10, Sergeant Carmine Celico responded to a suicidal subject. Upon arrival, he located the subject in their vehicle, gasping for air and struggling to remain conscious as they had fastened numerous zip ties around their neck. Sergeant Celico proceeded to cut the zip ties free from the subject's neck, which prevented them from ending their life. The subject was subsequently taken into protective custody.

LIFE SAVING AWARD — Deputies Michael Gibbs and Kyle Manka

On July 11, Deputies Michael Gibbs and Kyle Manka responded to a 911 call from an armed and suicidal man. Upon arrival, they found the man holding a handgun to his head. After the firearm failed to discharge twice due to an unknown malfunction and while both deputies observed the male manipulate the firearm in attempt to make it operational, the deputies then seized the opportunity to disarm the man and place him in protective custody. Their quick and brave actions saved a life and ensured no one was harmed.

LIFE SAVING AWARD — Deputies Nathaniel Drew and Jacquelyn Medina

On August 13, Deputies Nathaniel Drew and Jacquelyn Medina performed life-saving CPR on an elderly man who collapsed without a pulse at Planet Fitness in Palm Coast. Due to their quick actions before medical arrival, they were able to assist in regaining the man's pulse. He was then transported to AdventHealth Hospital.

UNIT CITATION — Chief Deputy Joe Barile; Chief Agustin Rodriguez; Commanders George Bender, Ryan Emery, and Brian Finn; Detective Sergeants Frank Gamarra, Daniel Weaver, and Jacob West; Detective Corporals Bryan Denker, Seth Green, and Christopher Santoianni; Corporal Andrew Cangialosi; Master Detectives Darrell Butler, Kyle Gaddie, Daniel Malta, and Omar Ocampo; Master Deputies Nicholas Champion and Marcus Dawson; Master Detention Deputy Justine Crego; Detective First Class John Hill; Detectives Austin Dalrymple, Maxwell Dorsey, and Shannon Smith; Deputies Iverson Brown, Anthony Cuthbert, Jaxon Dorsey, Dennis King, Jake Moorhead, and Alexander Wolfe; Detention Deputy Bobby Peters; Director of Public Information Tonya Woodworth; Public Information Officer Joseph Bober; Real Time Crime Center Specialists Victoria Hanlin and Amber Morrow

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In July 2025, the Special Investigations Unit concluded Operation: Summer Slammer, a large-scale operation requiring multiple divisions and units working together.

The six-month investigation consisted of over 50 undercover operations in which large amounts of narcotics, cash, and firearms were seized. The investigation resulted in 24 arrest warrants for various narcotics offenses including drug sale and drug trafficking charges. SIU, the Problem Area Crime Enforcement Unit, K-9 Unit, SWAT team, Criminal Intelligence Unit, Community Policing Division, and Real Time Crime Center diligently worked to locate all subjects through various investigative techniques. The Court and Detention Services Division assisted by performing off-site booking to assist in the investigative efforts. During the booking process, the Criminal Intelligence Unit conducted thorough interviews with each subject.

UNIT CITATION — Detention Corporal Douglas Evans; Detention Sergeant Nathan Hockenberry; Detention Deputy First Class Sara Radford; Detention Deputies William Amspoker, Amber Kruithoff, and Arjay Shaw; Dr. Zehra Cumber, Alesia Bain, and Catherine McErlane

On July 10, a medical emergency was called in at the jail medical department by Deputy Amber Kruithoff. Other detention deputies responded to assist. They assisted the inmate to the ground, at which time Detention Corporal Douglas Evans and Detention Deputy William Amspoker began CPR while medical staff monitored and assisted with the automated external defibrillator, taking vitals, and running an oxygen line. Medical treatment continued until Flagler County Fire Rescue arrived on scene. Thanks to the quick, coordinated and professional actions taken by deputies and Prime Care medical staff in performing life-saving measures, the inmate was safely transported to AdventHealth Hospital, where he was treated for his medical conditions.

UNIT CITATION — Detective Sergeant George Hristakopoulos; Detective Corporals Michael Breckwoldt and Mark Moy; Corporals James Crosbee and Daniel LaVerne

First reported in 2015, this case involved sexual battery against a child between 2006 and 2009. Initially, the victim was manipulated into silence, but the case stalled due to investigative hurdles. The investigation was revived in March 2023 when the victim provided additional evidence, and detectives located the suspect in another state. Despite further setbacks, the case gained new momentum in February 2025. Detectives repaired and forensically examined the victim's damaged cellphone, which revealed crucial new evidence, and obtained the suspect's cellular records, which corroborated the victim's account.

On July 29, an arrest warrant was issued for two counts of sexual battery on a child. The successful prosecution of this case was praised as a testament to the Major Case Unit's dedication.

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UNIT CITATION — Chief Agustin Rodriguez; Detective Corporal Michael Breckwoldt; Master Detectives Adam Gossett, Daniel Malta, and Omar Ocampo; Master Deputy Crista Rainey; Detective Austin Dalrymple; Deputies Chandler Anderson and Paige Blake; Real Time Crime Center Manager Nikki North; Digital Forensics Analyst Ebony Watson

On July 30, detectives responded to a suspicious death that was determined to be caused by a fentanyl overdose. Through the collaborative efforts of the Major Case Unit, SIU, and PACE Unit, the supplier was quickly identified, located, arrested, and later convicted — receiving a 16-year prison sentence.

UNIT CITATION — Sergeant James Miley; Master Deputy Marcus Dawson; Deputy First Class Richard Wallis; Deputies Paige Blake and Christopher Nguyen; Communications Specialist Ashlie Hicks; Steve “Rabbit” Durrance

On August 28, deputies responded to a 911 call from a man lost in Princess Place Reserve during a rainstorm. Communications Specialist Ashlie Hicks provided the caller's coordinates to deputies. Deputies located the man's vehicle and deployed a drone. Sergeant James Miley and Master Deputy Marcus Dawson entered the wooded area with assistance from Steve “Rabbit” Durrance of Flagler County Public Works, who helped with access and navigation. After approximately 25 minutes of searching through knee-deep marsh, deputies located the lost man and escorted him to safety.

UNIT CITATION — Chief Agustin Rodriguez; Commander Brian Finn; Detective Sergeants Gabe Fuentes, George Hristakopoulos, and Jacob West; Detective Corporal Christopher Santoianni; Master Detective Omar Ocampo; Detectives Maxwell Dorsey and Elizabeth “Annie” Lagana; David Petkovsek

On August 18, a victim reported a scam where an individual impersonating a sheriff's office representative demanded \$5,000 from him to avoid arrest. The victim stayed in contact with the suspect, which allowed detectives to intervene. Detectives placed a decoy envelope at the instructed drop-off location. Detectives then arrested the suspect after he retrieved the envelope. The suspect was found to be a middleman in a larger scheme. This case highlights the outstanding teamwork between the victim and various detectives from multiple units, whose coordinated efforts directly prevented this suspect from defrauding a member of the community

UNIT CITATION — Detention Deputies Walker Skoglund and Jarique Williams; Travis Jordan, Jean Murphy

On September 5, a critical medical emergency occurred at the jail in which the swift actions and teamwork of the staff directly saved a life. During the incident, deputies and medical personnel worked together seamlessly by initiating an emergency response, securing the inmate's airway, and providing immediate medical treatment that led to the inmate's stabilization and safe transport to the hospital.

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CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Master Detective Adam Gossett

In July, Master Detective Adam Gossett conducted a thorough investigation into a delayed robbery case involving two Bank of America locations in Palm Coast. His work identified four suspects connected to a well-organized South American theft ring. Because of his work, a multi-agency operation was launched which included the Department of Homeland Security and several state and local law enforcement agencies from around the country. This investigation not only resolved the initial case, but also provided crucial intelligence that helped agencies across the country link the suspects to numerous other crimes. His actions exemplify how local investigations can support national law enforcement efforts and stop international criminal enterprises.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Detention Deputy Ty Jurgensen

On July 13, while escorting an inmate from booking to housing, Detention Deputy Ty Jurgensen was unexpectedly assaulted in an unprovoked and violent attack. Despite being struck and knocked to the ground, he remained composed under pressure and demonstrated exceptional tactical awareness by issuing loud verbal commands and deploying his taser to regain control of the situation. His response reflected sound decision making in a rapidly evolving encounter. Even after sustaining injury, he maintained situational awareness and displayed restraint, professionalism, and bravery that are emblematic of FCSO's core values. His actions prevented further harm, showed unwavering courage under direct threat, and displayed his dedication to duty and his quick thinking.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Deputy Mark Rexford

On July 22, Deputy Mark Rexford investigated a fraud case involving an elderly victim. After obtaining subpoenas and search warrants, he identified and located the suspect, who was already in custody on unrelated charges, and secured a confession and an apology letter. Through his thorough investigation, Deputy Rexford confirmed that the suspect stole approximately \$800 from the victim. He then arrested the suspect on multiple felony charges. Deputy Rexford showed exceptional investigative work beyond the scope of his responsibilities, all while serving as a field training officer who had active trainees participating in the investigation process.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Detective First Class Joseph O'Barr

Throughout the entire quarter, Detective First Class Joseph O'Barr has distinguished himself as an asset to the Cyber Crimes Unit and the Northeast Florida Inter-Agency Child Exploitation and Persons Trafficking Task Force. In a short time, he has led or served as co-lead on three noteworthy major investigations that resulted in the arrests of dangerous offenders involved in child exploitation and related crimes. His work directly protected vulnerable children, removed predators from the community, and revived what was previously a non-existent ICAC program.

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CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Detective Corporal Adam Barkoskie

In January, an investigation revealed a woman had fraudulently posed as a registered nurse at AdventHealth Palm Coast, treating approximately 4,486 patients without a valid license. Detective Corporal Adam Barkoskie worked with state and federal agencies to uncover the full extent of the fraud and secure an arrest warrant. The suspect was charged with multiple felony counts and taken into custody without incident. Detective Corporal Barkoskie's thorough investigation, persistence, and dedication to justice exemplify the highest standards of law enforcement professionalism.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION — Sergeant Chris Ragazzo

In his role as the Motors Unit Sergeant, Sergeant Chris Ragazzo took the initiative to apply for two different grants that focused on the safety of the motoring public. He applied for funding through the Florida Department of Transportation's Motorcycle Safety Grant and the Florida Sheriffs Association's Teen Driver Challenge Grant. To date, the FDOT grant has been approved three years in a row, and the FSA grant has been approved two consecutive years. Combined, they have provided total funding of \$396,000 for overtime and equipment in support of these safety initiatives. The continuing approval of this funding requires many man hours and extensive documentation to support that the funds are being used efficiently, and Sergeant Ragazzo has taken on the task of continuing to manage and apply for these grants. His initiative in these projects goes above and beyond his typical assigned role.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION — Records Clerk Mera Kozlenko

In July, records clerk Mera Kozlenko provided essential translation support to the General Assignment Unit during investigations involving Russian-speaking victims and suspects. Her accurate and timely translations, as well as detailed transcriptions, helped detectives gain a clear understanding which significantly advanced the cases. Kozlenko's assistance resulted in five separate cases being closed with arrests and Charges. Her dedication, professionalism, and willingness to go beyond her regular duties were instrumental to the investigations' successes and are truly commendable.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD — Director of Human Resources Christopher Wagner

After a nationwide search, Director of Human Resources Christopher Wagner was appointed to modernize the human resources function of FCSO. During this time, agencies across the country were often unable to fill vacancies and were competing for employees. Today, FCSO has all positions filled and is in an approved over-hire status with a waiting list. FCSO has been recognized twice by the Daytona Beach News-Journal as one of the ten best places to work in Volusia/Flagler. FCSO now has partnerships with the military and is listed as a preferred employer for retiring military members. Director Wagner has led multiple analyses and open enrollments as FCSO strives to provide the best healthcare insurance at the best pricing possible for employees.

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DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD — Chief of Staff Mark Strobridge

Since January 2017, Chief of Staff Mark Strobridge has been instrumental in carrying out Sheriff Staly's vision of creating a modern, cutting-edge, and professional law enforcement agency the citizens of Flagler County can be proud of and support. Chief Strobridge has been a crucial part of implementing this vision by negotiating budgets with the county administration and City of Palm Coast staff, coordinating funding to close the gap on "deficit" deputies, which has allowed FCSO to become a proactive law enforcement agency and reduce crime by over 50%. He has been instrumental in the design and construction of the new Flagler Sheriff's Operations Center and a permanent District 2 Office, as well as a Regional Multi-Agency Training Center in conjunction with the Florida State Guard, and the modernization of all specialty vehicles and equipment.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD — Chief Daniel Engert

Court and Detention Services Division Chief Daniel Engert has been instrumental in implementing Sheriff Staly's vision to change the culture and inmate services at the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility. After a nationwide search, Chief Engert was appointed to transform the facility into a model county jail that protects detention staff and the community from offenders but also provides opportunities for inmates to become productive citizens. In just five years, the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility has become an award-winning and accredited county jail. Inmates in the jail's Successful Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Treatment program and Homeward Bound Initiative now have opportunities once they leave the jail, and the recidivism rate has dropped significantly. Chief Engert also serves on the Florida Commission on Corrections Accreditation.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

July — Deputy Kyle Manka

August — Detective Corporal Adam Barkoskie

September — Detective First Class Joseph O'Barr

YEARS OF SERVICE

5 years — Detective Kyle Somers; Deputies Rachel Evans, Kyle Manka, Cameron Punskey, Alexander Wolfe, and Jonathan Zalak; Crossing Guard William Cheney

10 years — Sergeant Troy Van Pelt, Corporal J Gibson Smith, Master Detective Daniel Malta, Master Deputy Crista Rainey, Deputy Blake Colson

15 years — Detention Corporal Brian Capobianco, Master Detention Deputy Justin Bailey

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20 years — Commander Brian Finn, Detention Commander Althea Civil, Corporal Brandon Fiveash

SPECIALTY SERVICE AWARDS

Five or more consecutive years of service in the Crisis Negotiations Team – Detective Sergeant Daniel Weaver, Corporal Benjamin Jurec, Master Deputy Crista Rainey, Deputy First Class Bryan Carter

SWAT team – Detective Corporal Michael Breckwoldt, Corporal William Lowe

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