



**Rick Staly, Sheriff**

## **FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Public-Private Partnership Results in Enhanced Capabilities for Flagler County with the Acquisition of a Bell Helicopter**

*Sheriff Dedicates Medevac Capability to Jane Gentile-Youd*



*Flagler County Sheriff's Office Bell 505 Helicopter (Artist Rendering)*

BUNNELL, Fla. — Through a public-private partnership, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office has acquired a Bell 505 helicopter. The FCSO partnered with Dan Newlin to expand response capabilities for search and rescue, air support for law enforcement operations, and patient transport. This is the next step in FCSO providing enhanced core emergency services to our growing community.

The 2018 Bell 505, also known as the Jet Ranger X, is valued at \$1.42 million. In addition to the private donation, FCSO used seized drug money and year-end budget savings to create the public-private partnership. Drug dealers contributed \$125,000 and one-time budget savings added an additional \$575,000 for a total of \$700,000. Mr. Newlin donated the remaining \$720,000 in market value. Mr. Newlin also donated additional support equipment valued at \$30,000.

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"Public safety is always our top priority. Thanks to Mr. Dan Newlin's generosity and taking the profits from drug dealers along with a one-time nonrecurring budget savings, we were able to obtain a state-of-the-art helicopter for less than half the cost," said Sheriff Rick Staly. "This is a huge win for our community as it expands our ability to quickly respond to emergencies, especially with medevac for serious accidents. The community has clamored for 24-hour emergency trauma capability. This public-private partnership makes that a reality at a significantly reduced cost to taxpayers."

When operational, the Bell 505 includes a state-of-the-art FLIR camera system, night-sun spotlight and medevac capabilities. This partnership significantly enhances support of FCSO's Community Policing Division with search and rescue capabilities for missing persons, tracking fleeing suspects and directing deputies to fleeing suspects, maritime searches, and routine patrols. Unlike drones, a helicopter can carry personnel and equipment to remote or hard to access areas of Flagler County — such as Flagler Estates and Western Flagler County — conduct emergency medical airlifts, and operate across greater distances, greatly extending FCSO's operational range and response time. This public-private partnership was made possible through a personal donation by Mr. Newlin and not from the law firm.

"This donation is about giving back to the community and helping law enforcement do their jobs more effectively," said Dan Newlin. "When I learned about the Sheriff's Office's need for a helicopter, I knew it was an opportunity to make a real difference. This aircraft will help save lives, protect families, and keep Flagler County safe for years to come."

The FCSO has also partnered with the East Flagler Mosquito Control District. "We are proud to support the Sheriff's Office in expanding its aviation program," said Mark Positano, District Director. "By housing this helicopter at our facility, we're ensuring it can be ready to respond at a moment's notice."

This virtually new aircraft currently has approximately 535 flight hours and is being retrofitted for public safety missions. The helicopter will operate under FCSO's Special Operations Section and will expand FCSO's current drone aviation program. In 2022, Sheriff Staly started the Unmanned Aircraft System (drone) program, which was the start of the FCSO aviation program. Having helicopter capability will take the FCSO aviation program to the next level and will work in conjunction with the drone program, depending on situational needs.

Prior to this donation and when Flagler County FireFlight was not available, trauma medevac needs would have to rely on medevac helicopters from Jacksonville. For law enforcement needs when FireFlight was not available, FCSO would have to request air support from as far away as Seminole County, delaying responses. Often, other aircraft were not available and could not respond.

"I tried to work with FCFR to increase medevac and law enforcement availability with FireFlight, but that discussion was not successful, so I worked for a cost-affordable public-private partnership," Sheriff Staly added. "It's been a long time coming, and we're excited to soon give our deputies the additional aerial support they need to protect and serve our community. This helicopter is a game-changer for Flagler County, and I dedicate the medevac capability to Mrs. Jane Gentile-Youd who had long clamored for 24-hour medevac capability in Flagler County. It is truly sad that Jane passed before she

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could see her vision become a reality. I want to once again thank Mr. Dan Newlin for his donation and support of the Sheriff's Office, as this would not have been possible without him."

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