



# THE COLLIER STAR

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## Deputies Honored/Reunited With Man They Saved

Three Collier County Sheriff's Office deputies were recently honored with Distinguished Public Service Awards for rescuing a man who was pinned underwater by an 800-pound tractor mower in May.

But the Greater Naples Chamber, which organized the Oct. 21 awards ceremony, saved the best for last when it introduced Celestino Pelacio to the surprised crowd which included Sheriff Rambosk and many members of the first responder community at the Naples Yacht Club. Pelacio then approached the stage to thank Cpl. Pierre Jean, Cpl. David Donzanti and Detective James Kleinheinz for saving him.

Pelacio, a 51-year-old landscape worker from Bonita Springs, and Cpl. Jean shared a warm embrace. It was Cpl. Jean who was first on scene and lifted the heavy mower off Pelacio.

The Distinguished Public Service Award is given annually to recognize and publicly thank emergency personnel for their extraordinary efforts in keeping Collier County residents safe.

Cpl. Jean said he had no idea Pelacio would be at the ceremony and that it filled him with joy to meet the man he saved. He was still smiling about it when he came to work the next day.

"I'm not an emotional guy, but I was really happy, really glad," Cpl. Jean said. "I'm happy now. And I'm happy I didn't cry in front of everyone."

On May 25, Cpl. Jean responded to a call of a commercial grade tractor turned upside down in a lake. The tractor operator, Pelacio, was in dire peril.

Pelacio was completely submerged in the lake, seat-belted to the tractor and pinned beneath the weight of the machine. Cpl. Jean immediately



Cpl. Jean and Celestino Pelacio share an embrace after Pelacio made a surprise appearance at the Distinguished Public Service Awards ceremony.

entered the water assisted by two good Samaritans, successfully overturned the tractor and extricated Pelacio. Cpl. Jean dragged him to shore, determined that he was not conscious or breathing, and initiated CPR. Cpl. Donzanti and Detective Kleinheinz arrived on scene and joined in performing CPR. During CPR, Pelacio expelled water from his lungs and regained agonal breathing. Collier County medics arrived on scene and initiated advanced lifesaving techniques.



Cpl. Pierre Jean, Cpl. David Donzanti and Detective James Kleinheinz were reunited with Celestino Pelacio, whose life they saved in May, at the Greater Naples Chamber's Distinguished Public Service Awards ceremony Oct. 21. Shown from left are: Cpl. Jean, award presenter Reg Buxton, Pelacio, Cpl. Donzanti, award presenter Scott O'Dell, Detective Kleinheinz, and award presenter Patrick O'Connor. PHOTOS BY VIDEOGRAPHER/PHOTOGRAPHER MARINA TREJO/CCSO (2)



Kevin Rambosk  
Collier County Sheriff

### Dear Friends,

As we all know, traffic safety is critically important here in Collier County. Our deputies are on the road daily educating the public and enforcing traffic safety laws.

Our Safety & Traffic Enforcement Bureau has launched a pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign that will continue throughout the busy winter tourist season. This campaign is in addition to our regular operations that focus on curbing speeding, distracted driving and other unsafe driving practices.

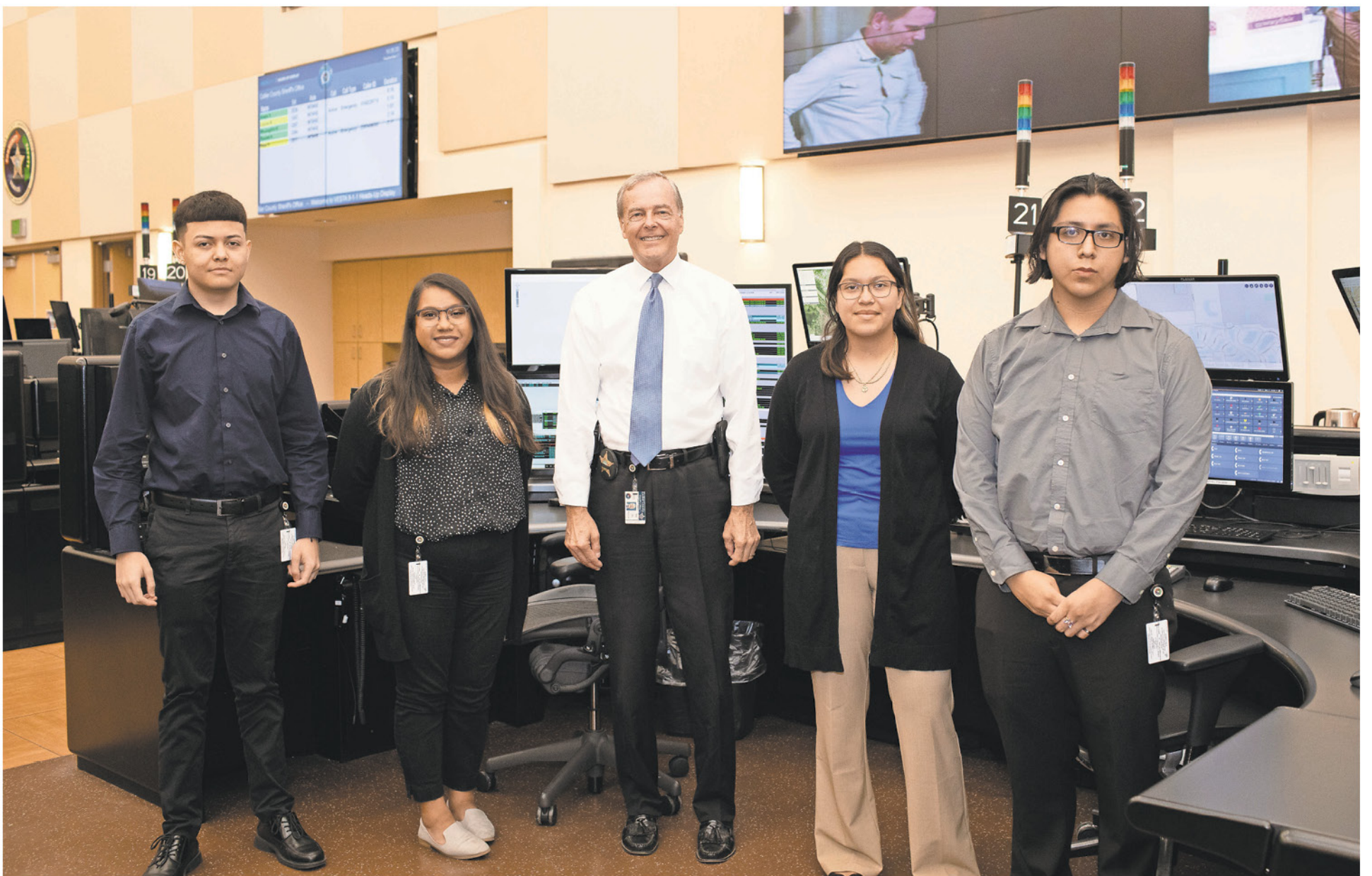
Our bicycle and pedestrian safety initiative will focus on high-visibility patrols in areas of the county that have experienced crashes resulting in serious and fatal injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists. The goal of this initiative is to increase awareness of and compliance with traffic laws that protect the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Enforcement efforts will focus primarily on education. However, violations may result in warnings or citations, depending on the circumstances. Remember:

- Drivers, obey speed limits, never drive impaired, and always watch for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Bicyclists, obey traffic laws, ride in the direction of traffic, and use lights when riding at night.
- Pedestrians, cross in crosswalks or at intersections, obey pedestrian signals, and make sure to be visible to drivers when walking at night.

By working together, we can keep our roads safe.

Yours in a safe community,

Kevin Rambosk,  
Collier County Sheriff



Sheriff Rambosk welcomes the first graduates of the new Public Safety Career Academy on their first day on the job as CCSO dispatcher trainees. Shown from left are: Halim Frias, Luzceleste Herrera, Sheriff Rambosk, Cenaida Herrera, and Edwin Ramirez. PHOTOS BY MEDIA RELATIONS BUREAU PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER MARINA TREJO/CCSO (2)

## CCSO Training Students To Be 911 Dispatchers

In classrooms across Collier County, students have been learning police codes, emergency dispatch center technology, how to respond to someone calling 911 in distress, and more.

Welcome to Sheriff Kevin Rambosk's Public Safety Career Academy.

Sheriff Rambosk recently launched a new initiative to train students as the next generation of 911 dispatchers in the hope they will choose to make dispatching a permanent career at the Collier County Sheriff's Office.

The idea for the Public Safety Career Academy was born out of a desire by the agency to develop ways to generate public interest in dispatching as a career, while also increasing opportunities for partnerships with the community.

"Our dispatchers play a critical role in our agency's mission to keep Collier County a great place and a safe place," Sheriff Rambosk said. "We are looking to train the next generation of dispatchers to perform this crucial job 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

The goal of the program is for the students to complete the 232 hours of training required to take the exam to become state certified as a public safety telecommunicator in Florida.



Academy participants tour the CCSO 911 Communications Center for a behind-the-scenes look at how the agency operates as part of their training.

While the students are learning they also begin the application and hiring process should they choose to continue a career with CCSO. The goal is that once they complete the certification program and pass the state test, they will be ready to start on-the-job training as a full-time dispatcher at CCSO, starting at \$18.02 an hour with full benefits.

CCSO launched the free academy over the summer in partnership with The Immokalee Foundation.

"This new relationship with the Collier County Sheriff's office continues to diversify the ways we prepare our students for success," Immokalee Foundation President and CEO Noemi Perez

said when the partnership was announced. "We are grateful to Sheriff Rambosk and his team for the leadership and vision, not just for helping to expand The Immokalee Foundation's educational program offerings, but for how this innovative new program will ultimately benefit our community at large."

Classes were taught at Immokalee Technical College (iTECH). Eleven students ranging in age from 16 to 22 spent six weeks accumulating the required training needed to earn their state certification. Four of the graduates have already completed the hiring process and begun their on-the-job training.

CCSO is also partnering with

Lorenzo Walker Technical College in East Naples in the program. Of the 10 LWIT students currently enrolled in the program, eight have submitted applications to CCSO and are going through the hiring process.

Luzceleste Herrera, 22, was attending Florida Gulf Coast University when she learned about the Academy through The Immokalee Foundation. She wanted a career that would allow her to help other people, so she decided to switch gears and give the Academy a try.

"I went through the Academy and fell in love with the program," Herrera said. "This gives me a chance to help multiple people on one of their worst days."

She graduated the Academy with her sister Cenaida Herrera, 18, and they are now doing their on-the-job training together as full-time CCSO dispatchers.

Herrera said she would encourage her peers to consider a career in dispatching based on her experience at the Academy.

"I would say if they are really interested in helping their community, I think this is a very rewarding job and I would recommend it," she said.

## CCSO Offers S.M.A.R.T. Course for Motorcycle Riders

When the agency's Safety and Traffic Enforcement Bureau saw an uptick last year in fatal crashes involving motorcyclists, deputies made it their mission to curb that number.

Now, the Collier County Sheriff's Office is among a handful of Florida law enforcement agencies offering a free course to motorcyclists teaching advanced safety techniques, and one of just two agencies offering a two-day course.

"The first day is all about making the motorcycle do what we need it to do, and day two is putting everything together and practicing safe application," said Sgt. Robert Reuthe.

Already, the agency has held one session of the Safe Motorcycle & Rider Techniques Course, or SMART Course, and secured a grant for five additional sessions. More than 65 motorcyclists are on a waitlist for upcoming sessions.

Sgt. Reuthe said there is no standardization for how SMART Courses are offered throughout the state, so the CCSO was free to design its own curriculum. The CCSO modeled its two-day course after one offered by the City of Tampa Motorcycle Unit.



Participants in the CCSO S.M.A.R.T. Course put the safe riding techniques they learned to the test during a recent 70-mile ride guided by deputies throughout Collier County.

Day one is a 10-hour session focusing on everything from mastering a start and stop position and maneuvering around cones to brake and escape survival skills motorcyclists need to dodge roadway debris and other vehicles. On the second day, participants take a 70-mile ride through the county, escorted by the agency's Motor Unit instructors.

In Florida, motorcyclists have to take a written test and a practical application test to secure their license.

"Our goal was to take it to the next step to offer more advanced

training," Sgt. Reuthe said. "That's the stuff that saves their lives."

Graduates of the class receive a certificate, which some insurance companies will recognize for a discount on premiums.

Palm Coast resident Terry Alexander made the trip to Collier County with his wife to attend the first CCSO SMART Course. He's made it a habit over his 54 years of riding motorcycles to attend both free and paid safety trainings to increase his skills.

"A lot of people think mileage, or time, or age makes them good riders and actually the opposite

is the truth," Alexander said.

Alexander prefers the free courses offered by law enforcement because class sizes are usually smaller, limited to about a dozen, and there are more trainers on site.

"It's really an amazing opportunity for civilians," he said of the CCSO SMART Course.

The agency plans to offer course graduates access to a closed course where they can continue to practice their skills. To learn more about the SMART Course, or to sign up for a future session, visit [www.colliersheriff.org/my-ccso/collier-smart](http://www.colliersheriff.org/my-ccso/collier-smart).



Sgt. Dave Estes is shown with his partner Sampson. CCSO recently began training its Mounted Patrol horses in scent detection. PHOTOS BY MEDIA RELATIONS VIDEOGRAPHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER MARINA TREJO/CCSO

# Mounted Patrol Horses Training To Detect Scent

A 12-year-old American Quarter Horse named Sampson took about 8 minutes to find a carefully hidden volunteer in an 89-acre semi-wooded cow pasture in Golden Gate Estates.

“Find ‘em,” Sgt. Dave Estes commanded Sampson, his partner of four years, to begin the search.

The horse alerted on a scent about a 30 yards into the search and then followed it about a quarter mile to where CCSO Special Operations Lt. Dennis De Rienzo was hiding behind a stand of trees. Sgt. Estes rewarded Sampson with a treat for the find.

“I was kind of flabbergasted, Lt. De Rienzo recalled. “I couldn’t believe the horse found me so quick.”

The Collier County Sheriff’s Office has been using its Mounted Patrol horses for searches since 2000 but recently began training them in scent detection. Once trained, the horses will be used primarily

for missions involving lost and missing persons. It will be one more tool in the agency’s tool kit which currently includes K9s, aircraft, swamp buggies, watercraft, and drones.

Lt. De Rienzo said he was somewhat skeptical of the training but the recent exercise made a believer out of him.

Sgt. Estes, who supervises the agency’s Agriculture Bureau and Mounted Patrol Unit, said dogs have a superior sense of smell but horses often hold the advantage because airborne scent rises and horses stand taller than dogs. That height advantage also increases a horse’s ability to see and hear.

Horses also hold an advantage over dogs in large area searches where fatigue comes into play, Sgt. Estes said. Dogs can’t work for extended periods and therefore have a short window of work. But a horse can go for hours in the Florida heat and rough terrain before



resting. Horses can drink water from a pond, swamp, or ditch which abound in the local terrain. Another plus for horses, a tired horse opens its nostrils wider, exposing more olfactory receptors, while a dog’s scenting ability is diminished when it’s panting and tired.

Sgt. Estes said he has been riding horses most of his life. He put together the training program after attending

a training session hosted by Peace River K9 Search and Rescue Inc. He said other law enforcement agencies around the country are starting to train their Mounted Patrols in scent detection.

“It’s not going to be something we use every day,” he said. “It’s a special skill and asset that we can have a positive impact on the safety of the public when it’s needed.”

# Corrections Awarded Excelsior Status

The Collier County Sheriff’s Office Corrections Department has been awarded its third Excelsior re-accreditation.

The Excelsior recognition is awarded to Florida criminal justice agencies which have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the Florida accreditation process. The CCSO Corrections Department has been accredited since 2000.

The Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission Inc. awarded the accreditation to CCSO at a ceremony in St. Petersburg on Oct. 6.

Santa Rosa County Sheriff Bob Johnson, who led the review said “It is evident that the Collier County Sheriff’s Office Corrections Department prides themselves in the accreditation process.”

CCSO had to meet 262 standards and have been awarded five successful reaccreditation cycles to receive this highest level of accreditation status.





# COLLIER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

# Community Snapshots



Our Huey shown against the dramatic backdrop of a stunning sunrise to kick off the Naples Take a Soldier Fishing event Sept. 18. PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK STROUBE



Deputies helped students around Collier County get to school safely on Walk To School Day. The annual walk promotes pedestrian safety and a healthy lifestyle. PHOTO BY MEDIA RELATIONS BUREAU VIDEOGRAPHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER MARINA TREJO/CCSO



CCSO SWAT put their training to the test and took first place overall in the 18th annual Southwest Florida Region 6 SWAT Challenge in September. Our winning team is shown from left: Cpl. Ryan Flowers, Cpl. Cody Stevenson, Cpl. Jose Lopez, Cpl. Andres Delgado, Cpl. Blaine Barbutto, and Cpl. Hunter Woods.



Sheriff Rambosk announced the arrests of two Washington state fugitives and the recovery of hundreds of stolen items including firearms and USPS packages at a Sept. 27 news conference. PHOTO BY MEDIA RELATIONS SPECIALIST KRISTINE GILL/CCSO



Sheriff Rambosk, Cmdr. Jamie Cunningham and the CCSO Honor Guard were in the room as the Republican Caucus of the Florida Senate officially selected Sen. Kathleen Passidomo of Naples as the President-Designate for the 2022-2024 Legislative Term. "Senator Passidomo is a longstanding ally to public safety," the Sheriff said. SUBMITTED PHOTO