



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

NEWS RELEASE

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FCSO Emergency Response Team Deployed to Taylor County to Assist Following Hurricane Helene

BUNNELL, Fla. — Fourteen members of the Flagler County Sheriff's Office Emergency Response Team have been deployed to Taylor County, located in Florida's Big Bend region, to assist in the areas hit hardest by Hurricane Helene.

Three deputies arrived in Taylor County on September 7, forming the forward operations team and setting up the Agency's Mobile Command Center. They were joined on September 30 by 11 deputies arriving in a caravan of vehicles that included the ERT Sleeping Quarters, Emergency Restaurant Team kitchen trailer, and several patrol vehicles. The ERT is a fully self-contained team equipped with chainsaws, various rescue tools, sleeping quarters, and food service for deployed team members.

Upon their arrival, ERT members were briefed by Sheriff Rick Staly and Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook, who serves as the Florida Sheriffs Task Force Region Coordinator, on their duties and the needs of Taylor County. Both Sheriffs toured some of the areas hit hardest, including Steinhatchee and Keaton Beach. Approximately 45% of the county, which has a population of nearly 22,000 people, is still without power.

"While Flagler County was fortunate to not have any major impacts from Hurricane Helene, other areas of Florida were unfortunately devastated by the storm," said Sheriff Staly. "Already, we've seen looters attempt to take advantage of this disaster but our mutual aid deputies arrested them. I thank our dedicated team for volunteering to assist our brothers and sisters in Taylor County and for their families their support and extra responsibilities during their deployment."

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Sheriffs Rick Staly and Michelle Cook in Taylor County with members of the Flagler County and Clay County Emergency Response Teams.

The ERT was activated by the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Sheriffs Task Force. Under the Florida Sheriffs Association’s Mutual Aid agreement, FCSO deputies have full law enforcement authority while on deployment in Taylor County or wherever else they may be deployed. Hundreds of law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and search and rescue teams from around the state have been deployed to counties in Florida’s Big Bend region to assist.

Since this is a State Emergency Management authorized mission, all costs incurred will be reimbursed by the Florida Division of Emergency Management or the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



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Photos illustrating the damage caused by Hurricane Helene in Taylor County.

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