

Okaloosa County News Release

April 8, 2015

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NR15-35

PHOTO CAPTION (l-r): County Administrator John Hofstad and Airports Director Sunil Harman present Airports Police Chief Andy Johnson with the Okaloosa County HERO Award at the April 7 Okaloosa County Commission Meeting. (HERO: Humanitarian Efforts Recognized by Okaloosa County)

Airports Police Chief Recipient of a HERO Award Chief Andy Johnson Recognized for Search and Rescue Support Following Helicopter Crash

One of the first search calls was made to the Destin Executive Airport (DTS) in hopes the missing UH60 Blackhawk had safely landed on March 10th, and unfortunately for so many, it did not. Chief Andrew (Andy) Johnson responded to DTS, secured the area and waited. In the early hours of March 11, he was notified that the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office was responding in the area of the Navarre Bridge and Chief Johnson decided to go see if he could assist in the rescue effort. "We all had the same goal and hope for survivors," said Chief Johnson, Okaloosa County Airports. "I just helped the local law enforcement and military members at a difficult time, with an intense workload until additional support arrived."

"Chief Johnson assisted in securing the heaviest debris area, documented evidence, and recovered two crew members, all above and beyond what he was required to do," stated Chairman Nathan Boyles, Okaloosa County Commission. "There was a need to secure as much as they could prior to daylight on a public beach, and he didn't hesitate to provide his knowledge and experience to that scene, along with a limited amount of initial responders, and for that he has earned recognition." Two UH60 aircraft assigned to Hammond, Louisiana Army National Guard were participating in a training exercise when one of the helicopters crashed. Eleven service members were killed.

The Humanitarian Efforts Recognized by Okaloosa County (HERO) award recognizes employees who not only go beyond the scope of what his or her job entails, but has done something of a humanitarian or heroic nature. The HERO Award can include acts occurring outside work hours and submissions by people outside Okaloosa County staff. Above and Beyond forms are available online at www.okaloosaf.com or you may contact 311 Citizen Information Line for more information or to recognize an Okaloosa County employee.

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