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OFFICE OF THE
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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

VIDEO BACK THE BLUE ALERT: At Protecting Seniors Summit for Law Enforcement, AG Moody Recognizes Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Florida Fish and Wildlife and Coast Guard for Rescuing Senior Boater



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—At the Citrus County Sheriff's Office Annual Protecting Seniors Law Enforcement Summit today, Attorney General Ashley Moody presented Back the Blue Awards to nine heroic law enforcement officers and service members for lifesaving efforts to rescue a distressed senior lost at sea. The deputies and officers arrived at the scene after receiving a call about an older Floridian in a small boat lost 15 miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. With severe weather rolling in, the team searched for the man and brought both the senior and the vessel back safely ashore.

During the summit, Attorney General Moody surprised Sgt. Evan Marshall, Dep. James Sudlow II, Lt. Morgan Willis, Officer Ryan Gilbert, Chief Boatswains Mate Matthew J. Rollins, First Class Boatswains Mate Timothy J. Wilson, First Class Boatswains Mate Brigitta M. Bockhorn and First Class Machinery Technician Justin A. Shue each with the Back the Blue Award.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These heroic public servants risked their lives to rescue a senior in dangerous conditions. It was an honor to surprise them at the Citrus County Sheriff's

Office Annual Protecting Seniors Law Enforcement Summit. We work hard to protect seniors in Florida, and these individuals went above and beyond, through choppy water in dangerous weather, to bring this older Floridian safely back to shore. They help us build a Stronger, Safer Florida.”

After spotting a boater in distress, the U.S. Coast Guard called CCSO to report a 16-foot aluminum vessel stranded roughly 15 miles off the shore of Crystal River. In a quick and collaborate effort, CCSO and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers responded to the scene, rescued and returned the senior to shore. [A tornado struck Crystal River at approximately 2 a.m. the next morning](#) and could have caused devastation to anyone stranded at sea.

Attorney General Moody launched the statewide Back the Blue campaign soon after taking office in 2019. The campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and local communities. Since its inception, Attorney General Moody has issued more than 50 Back the Blue Awards.

To nominate a law enforcement officer, citizen or organization for a Back the Blue Award, or for more information about Attorney General Moody’s Back the Blue campaign, click [here](#).

Attorney General Moody is committed to recognizing the heroic acts of Florida law enforcement officers and created the Hero Headlines webpage on [BeAFloridaHero.com](#) to showcase the brave feats of officers statewide. To learn more, click [here](#).

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Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Back the Blue campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Supporting law enforcement is a top priority for Attorney General Moody and the mission of Back the Blue is to commend Florida’s brave law enforcement officers and Floridians who back them.