



Pasco Sheriff's Office

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Sheriff disbands Aviation Unit, positions redeployed as road deputies

NEW PORT RICHEY -- Pasco Sheriff Bob White announced the disbanding of the agency Aviation Unit today, in his continuing bid to increase the presence of law enforcement in communities while reducing operation costs.

The funds for one observer, one mechanic, and two pilots in the unit will be redeployed into positions as road patrol deputies, which total about \$441,000 a year in salary and benefits. Earlier this year, a sergeant's position in the unit was moved to road patrol.

The four helicopters in the unit (type: OH58) will be returned to the federal government, where they were originally obtained via a grant program. The lease for the hanger where the Aviation Unit was housed will be terminated, which will provide an estimated \$60,000 savings a year to the county. A fixed-wing airplane (type: 1978 Cessna Skyhawk 172) will be placed on Aerotrader.com for an asking price of \$100,000. Total estimated expenses available for reallocation to other law enforcement needs from maintenance, fuel, equipment, and insurance costs are about \$158,000 a year.