PALM BAY POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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SOAR TEAM EARNS AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(Palm Bay)--Palm Bay Police Departments SOAR (Search Operations Aerial Response) team received national recognition Wednesday, receiving an award for Innovation in Local Government by the Alliance for Innovation, a nationwide organization comprised of government professionals. Police Chief Doug Muldoon along with members of the team traveled to Clearwater, Florida to accept the "J. Robert Havlick Award for Innovation in Local Government".

Palm Bay's SOAR team was established as a first of its kind test program in 2009 and became nationally recognized in 2010. The team uses ultra-light aircraft called powered paragliders for law enforcement purposes. The powered paragliders have been used to conduct searches, surveillance and capture aerial video and photos. The team recently searched for a missing suicidal individual in a large wooded area. Upon seeing the SOAR unit searching for him, the individual safely emerged. Responding officers were able to get the individual to a treatment facility.

Innovation award winners were chosen from more than 40 applications received from across the U.S. and Canada. Applications were reviewed by a multi-member selection committee consisting of city and county managers throughout the country, Arizona State University Faculty and Alliance for Innovation staff. The selection committee looked for those local governments that have shown their dedication to stretching and improving the boundaries of day-to-day government operations and practices, implementing creative business processes and improving the civic health of the community.

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