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Brotherhood Riders ride bicycles through Levy and Dixie counties



This still shot and other still shots were taken northwest of Bronson on U.S. Alt. 27, before the turn leading to the Levy County Sheriff's Office.

Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © July 27, 2016 @ 9:47 a.m., All Rights Reserved

FLORIDA -- An impressive group of bicyclists riding from South Florida to Fort Walton Beach passed through Levy County and Dixie County on Tuesday (July 26), and they stayed overnight in Perry (Taylor County), according to their stated route plan.

The Brotherhood Ride 2016 – Cycling For Fallen Heroes, Candy Morse noted in a press release, is dedicated to five Fallen Heroes from Florida and one Fallen Hero from Georgia, who died in the line of duty in 2015.

“Our team of 30 riders and 15 support members will honor them by cycling through the state of Florida in seven days, covering over 600 miles and averaging 80 to 100 miles a day.

The ride began on July 23 in North Naples, Morse said.



Levy County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Max Long drives an LCSO SUV as he leads the group on U.S. Alt. 27.

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Another LCSO vehicle follows Sgt. Long's lead.

There are stops planned for Arcadia, Lakeland, Ocala, Perry, Carrabelle, Panama City and the riders are slated to end their sojourn in Fort Walton Beach on July 29, Morse said.

The Brotherhood Ride organization consists of firefighters, police officers and EMS personnel who ride bicycles to honor emergency first responders who died in the line of duty.

Their mission is to provide emotional and financial support to the families on or near the anniversary of their death.

The Brotherhood Ride continues the tradition of honor, dedication and pride, Morse said.

During the past eight years, this group has honored the memory and sacrifice of a total of 505 emergency first responders, which includes firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel.

“Our team has traveled on bicycles over 7,100 miles, through 16 states, have been hosted by over 40 Elks Lodges nationwide and assisted by countless emergency first responders who have shown the true meaning of Brotherhood,” Morse said. “Through year-round fundraising efforts, the Brotherhood Ride has been able to honor the memory of fallen heroes and provide emotional and financial support to their families.

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Vehicles from Estero, Bronson Fire Rescue and the Florida Forestry Service were among those in this part of the very long ride.

The 2016 Ride will be dedicated to six fallen heroes. EOW is the abbreviation for End of Watch, which is a designation for the time when the officer died. For a firefighter it is Last Alarm.

* Deputy Sheriff William Myers Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
- E.O.W. Sept. 22, 2015

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* Police Officer Jared Forsyth Ocala Police Department
- E.O.W. April 6, 2015

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* Lieutenant Randy Parker Macon-Bibb County (Georgia) Fire Department

- Last Alarm Feb. 11, 2015

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* K9 Igor Kissimmee Police Department

- E.O.W. April 21, 2015

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* K9 Jimmy Hialeah Police Department

- E.O.W. May 27, 2015

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* K9 Hector Hialeah Police Department

- E.O.W. May 27, 2015

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Rider and Support Participation Information:

- Florida Fire Departments (23)
- Florida Police Departments (six)
- Texas Fire Departments (two)
- Massachusetts Fire Departments (two)
- Colorado Fire Department (one)
- Connecticut Police Departments (three)
- New York Police Departments (one)
- German Fire Department (one)
- Civilians with support (six)

To help support the loved ones who are left behind; they rely on donations, support, and sponsorship as the sole means of obtaining their goal, Morse said.

This year's proceeds will benefit the families of the fallen heroes. To help the Brotherhood Ride reach their goal, people may visit the website to make a donation, purchase t-shirts or contact them if they want more information on becoming a sponsor, Morse said.

<http://www.brotherhoodride.com>