

JOINT AVIATION UNIT CELEBRATES 20 YEARS



On May 6th, the Alachua County Joint Aviation Unit (FL.) celebrated their 20th anniversary at the unit's hangar in Gainesville, FL. The unit has been a collaborative venture of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office and the Gainesville Police Dept. since 1996 when it was started utilizing two surplus OH-6 helicopters. On hand for the event, were more than 100 current and former members and supporters, and of course Sheriff Sadie Darnell and Chief Tony Jones. The event was emceed by retired Gainesville Police Capt. and former Unit Commander Ed VanWinkle, who presented plaques on behalf of Airbus Helicopters. Attendees enjoyed a fly in by several aircraft, live country music and a delicious catered dinner. Today, the Joint Aviation Unit operates three OH-58 helicopters and is staffed by six pilots, five tactical flight officers and a mechanic.