



News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Fire and Police Agencies Join to Donate Blood Vow There Will Be No Summer Shortage Of Blood In Our Area

Sarasota- With hoses in hand and sirens ready, first responders are gearing up for the 3rd Annual Suncoast Communities Blood Bank "Boots and Badges" blood drive competition. Ten first responder agencies from two counties will take part in this year's event, which runs July 1st to August 5th.

The goal of the competition is to raise a minimum of 400 units of blood for local hospitals during slow summer months when blood donations for our area typically decrease by 15%. This drop is attributed to high school summer vacations and the absence of seasonal residents.

"Both high school students and seasonal residents are high volume blood donors," said Dr. Mark Magenheim, CEO and Medical Director of Suncoast Communities Blood Bank. "When they are often absent from summer blood drives, everyone else has to work harder to make up the difference."

That need for increased donations was the impetus behind "Boots and Badges." The friendly competition between fire and police departments creates increased awareness among these first responder agencies as well as increasing the much needed blood donations.

"We can't say enough about the skill and dedication of our community's first responders," said Bill Colgate, MD, medical director of Sarasota Memorial's Emergency Care Center. "They work tirelessly every day to help people in emergency situations, often providing life-saving treatment. While it may seem like just a bit of fun, this competition raises awareness for vital blood donations and is one more facet of their commitment."

"Donating blood is easy. No blazing fires, no ladders to climb or heavy gear to put on. What a great way to save a life," said Assistant Chief Paul Dezzi, of the Sarasota County Fire Department. "Just as with our friends in law enforcement, we stand ready to help whenever help is needed."

Kick Off Event

To kick off the competition, SCBB will host an event Tuesday, July 1st from 11:00 a.m. to Noon at the Nokomis blood donor center located at 1097 North Tamiami Trail (in the Nokomis Village Shopping Center at US 41 and Laurel Roads). Event chairperson, Jim Gabbert, an SCBB board member and retired Sarasota County firefighter, will rally the agencies along with SCBB staff. Fire department and law enforcement representatives from Sarasota and DeSoto counties will attend. The media is invited and will have opportunities to interview agency leaders and film video of agency members donating for their team.

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The following agencies are expected to participate: Bayflite; DeSoto County Sheriff's Office; Florida Highway Patrol Venice; Nokomis Volunteer Fire Department; North Port Police Department; North Port Fire Rescue; Sarasota County Fire Department; Sarasota County Sheriff's Office; Sarasota Police Department; USF Police and Venice Fire Department. Each donor will receive a commemorative t-shirt. The team, either "Boots" or "Badges" that raises the most blood donations wins a traveling trophy and a cruise on the LeBarge. The winner of the 2006 campaign was the "Badges" team. The "Boots" team took the title last year. Of course, the true winners of the competition are those patients who rely on lifesaving blood.

About SCBB

Suncoast Communities Blood Bank is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization founded in 1949, serving the community exclusively for nearly 60 years. SCBB provides a reliable supply of quality blood products and transfusion services regionally to five hospitals as well as Bayflite Medical Helicopter. For more information about Suncoast Communities Blood Bank visit www.scbb.org or call 1-866-97BLOOD.

Boots and Badges blood drives

The following agency blood drives are scheduled for the "Boots and Badges" campaign:

June 26 th	DeSoto County Sheriff's Office	1:00p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
July 1 st	North Port Fire Department	7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
July 2 nd	North Port Police Department	3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
July 3 rd	North Port Fire Department	8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
July 3 rd	Nokomis Fire Department	6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
July 8 th	Englewood Fire Department	7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
July 8 th	Florida Highway Patrol Venice	Noon to 4:00 p.m.
July 9 th	Sarasota County Fire Department	8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
July 16 th	Sarasota County Fire Department	8:00 a.m. to Noon
July 21 st	Sarasota County Sheriff's Office	Noon to 4:00 p.m.
July 23 rd	Sarasota Police Department	6:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
July 23 rd	Sarasota County Sheriff's Office	6:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
July 29 th , 30 th & 31 st	Venice Fire Department	8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Four additional "Boots and Badges" blood drives will be held at Dunkin Donuts locations on these dates:

July 9 th	Dunkin Donuts, 5641 Clark Road,	7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
July 16 th	Dunkin Donuts 5871 Fruitville Road	7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
July 23 rd	Dunkin Donuts 1801 S. Tamiami Trail Venice	7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
July 30 th	Dunkin Donuts 5641 Clark Road	7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

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