

Lake County Sheriff's Office



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**John D. Idleburg
Sheriff**

MEDIA RELEASE

Corrections Officer Charged with Official Misconduct, Theft

A Lake County Sheriff's Corrections Officer, Manuel Duarte, has been charged with one count of theft (class 2 felony) and one count of official misconduct (class 3 felony), following a criminal and internal investigation conducted by the Lake County Sheriff's Office. The investigation found Duarte stole over \$20,000.00, after falsifying timecards.

After being sworn-in as Sheriff in December, Sheriff John Idleburg conducted an initial assessment of the internal structure, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Sheriff's Office. Following the assessment, Sheriff Idleburg made several internal changes, including the promotion of new executive-level leadership in the Lake County Jail. The newly placed jail leadership has been making ongoing changes to previously existing policy and procedure, optimizing operational efficiency and ensuring internal compliance.

In June of 2019, Lake County Sheriff's Correctional Command found a discrepancy in the electronic timecard of Correctional Officer Manuel Duarte. Corrections Command notified Sheriff's Administrative Command. Sheriff John Idleburg immediately ordered an internal investigation to be conducted by the Office of Professional Standards and placed Duarte on administrative leave, relieving him of his duties.

A comprehensive investigation found Duarte modified his electronic timecards to include overtime hours for hours he did not actually work. The investigation revealed this occurred on various timecards dating back to November of 2017 and resulted in the payout of over \$20,000.00.

On October 16, 2019, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the charges of official misconduct (class 3 felony) and theft (class 2 felony). An arrest warrant was drafted, a Lake County Judge authorized the warrant and set Duarte's bond at \$200,000.00. The Lake County Sheriff's Warrants Team arrested Duarte at his residence in the 38300 block of North Holdridge Avenue, Beach Park, at approximately 3:30PM. Duarte was transported to the Lake County Jail where he is currently being held pending an initial court hearing this afternoon.

An employment termination process has been initiated for Duarte.

Sheriff John Idleburg said, “I am extremely disappointed that a member of our Office would violate their oath and the public’s trust. Neither I, nor our staff, will tolerate an employee violating the laws we are sworn to enforce. We enlisted to serve the community, not take advantage of the community. This rogue corrections officer is not a reflection of the hard-working personnel we have, who dedicate themselves to serving the Lake County Community.”

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