



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Sheriff Mike Downey

COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM ASSISTS ILLINOIS STATE POLICE WITH BARRICADED FUGITIVE

June 3, 2021- Kankakee, IL- Sheriff's deputies, officers from several local law enforcement agencies and the Kankakee County Emergency Response Team (ERT) assisted the Illinois State Police yesterday in Oak Creek Estates Mobile Home Park. Information shared by the IL State Police to Tri County Auto Theft Task Force Officers provided information regarding the suspect's whereabouts. Officers were on scene in an effort to take Josh R Morales, 28 of Bourbonnais, into custody on several outstanding arrest warrants. Once Morales had barricaded himself in the residence to avoid arrest, additional law enforcement resources, including the ERT, arrived to assist.

The County ERT utilized the MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicle to enter



the residence and physically extract Morales without incident after several hours of attempting to persuade Morales to voluntarily surrender.

"The fact that our officers were in possession of this military surplus vehicle from the Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) and were able to utilize it against someone who made statements regarding his commitment to fighting it out with the police and his refusal to return to prison peacefully is invaluable," said Sheriff Mike Downey. "This incident is an example that military surplus equipment, such as this, despite so many criticizing it's use in law enforcement, allows officers to do their jobs while significantly limiting chances for injury or loss of life, to both the officers and the person(s) they are attempting to apprehend."

"This particular individual has had numerous encounters with local law enforcement agencies and is a known drug-user. In fact, our own deputies have revived this individual by providing him with life-saving doses of Narcan (Naloxone) on multiple occasions. Additionally, our officers, as well as other law enforcement agencies in the



immediate area have had several dangerous high-speed pursuits where Morales was in possession of stolen vehicles.”

“This individual displays the current revolving-door of the criminal justice system and how it endangers not only the officers attempting to apprehend him time-after-time, but also the community-at-large. These are precisely the types of criminals in our communities that some legislators in Illinois are pushing to be released from jails and prisons.”

“Morales is a person of interest in multiple Catalytic Converter theft cases throughout Kankakee County (and surrounding counties). While some believe these types of crimes are relatively minor on the grand scheme of things, some of the victims in these cases have had to spend as much as \$2000 to have their vehicles repaired.”

Sheriff Downey continued, “I want to applaud the work of Chief Chad Gessner and Lieutenant Andy Bayston on their efforts during yesterday’s incident.”

“The inter-agency cooperation amongst the Sheriff’s Office, the Illinois State Police, the Bradley Police Department, the Bourbonnais Police Department, the Kankakee County State’s Attorney’s Office, the US Marshal’s Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force and the Tri-County Auto Theft Task Force brought this volatile and tense incident to a peaceful resolution with Morales safely taken into custody.”

Morales was transported to the Jerome Combs Detention Center where he was booked on several charges including the Possession of a Stolen License Plate, Felony Theft, Felony Criminal Damage to Property and 2 Outstanding Arrests from Iroquois County. Morales will have his initial court appearance in a Kankakee County courtroom later this afternoon.

The Kankakee County Emergency Response Team is a multi-jurisdictional task force comprised of officers from the Sheriff’s Office, the Bradley Police Department, the Manteno Police Department and the Bourbonnais Police Department. The ERT team also has two medical doctors from Riverside Hospital. One of the doctors was on scene during the incident and treated one officer for minor injuries and evaluated Morales upon his arrest.