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- Yield to pedestrians
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As Executive Director of VSI, I want to know what you consider important and necessary to keep yours a safe community.

I deeply appreciate your support of the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute!

Sincerely,

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VIRGINIA'S CRIME RATE
Between 2015 and 2016, violent crime increased by 10 percent, while homicides jumped 26 percent. These trends were also apparent nationwide. At the time of going to print, 2017 statewide crime rate statistics were unavailable.

At a time of increasing heroin use and drug overdoses by citizens in our state and across the country, drug crime rates were on the rise as well during 2015 and 2016. And statewide, gun charges helped push weapons violations higher in 2016.

According to Virginia Tech criminologist, Jim Hwang, who was cited for an article in the Virginian-Pilot, "when taken as a whole, crime rate increases like this one — violence, guns, drugs, car thefts — tend to be associated with urban street gangs." Since 1992 crime rates have for the most part been on the decline. But 2015 and 2016 marked two years in a row of increasing crime in Virginia.

Despite these trends in the crime rate, Virginia has the third-lowest crime rate and the tenth-lowest property crime rate in the country. Virginia's sheriffs and deputies continue to lead and take part in a number of public safety task forces and initiatives that aim to strengthen the protection of citizens in our state.

VIRGINIA RULES
Young people commit and are more frequently the victims of violent crime than any other age group. That's why Virginia's sheriffs and deputies are taking an active role in promoting good citizenship among our youth.

Virginia Rules is a law-related education program administered by the Office of the Attorney General to educate teens about how Virginia laws apply to them. This is part of an ongoing effort to provide parents, teachers, and students with tools they need to ensure Virginia teens make better decisions and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Middle and high school students receive instruction on issues including bullying, dating violence, teen driving, alcohol and tobacco, gangs, Internet safety and more.

Last year nearly two dozen law enforcement agencies, including sheriff's offices across our state, hosted Virginia Rules Cams. These camps help build positive relationships between law enforcement officers and youth in communities across our state. To learn more, visit www.virginiarules.org.

TRAFFIC DEATHS ON THE RISE
According to the Virginia Department of Transportation, traffic deaths in Virginia increased significantly in 2017. It's also reported that about 40 percent of Virginia's traffic fatalities involve a vehicle hitting a fixed object, like a tree or pole.

The increase is attributed in part to cheap gasoline and an improving job picture resulting in Americans driving more. Most crashes are preventable, so this uptick in the number of traffic fatalities must and can be reduced significantly if more drivers paid attention and complied with the law.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE
The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute scholarship program — which is funded exclusively by generous VSI supporters like you — is granted to full-time or part-time students majoring in criminal justice and attending a Virginia state college or university. We awarded 79 scholarships for the 2017-2018 academic year. Only online scholarship applications will be accepted and can be found on our website. A full list of application requirements can be found at https://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship. Applications must be submitted by May 1, 2018.

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Over 250 Virginia sheriffs, management level deputies, and guests are taking part in the 2018 Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute’s Spring Conference and Virginia Sheriffs’ Association Exhibition. And we expect a tremendous turnout at this year’s conference to be held on April 25-27, 2018 at the Newport News Marriott at City Center in Newport News, Virginia.

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The Virginia Sheriffs’ Association’s upcoming 85th Annual Conference will be held September 11-13 in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

PUPPY FRAUD ALERT
Virginians are being targeted by scammers in a new scheme that targets dog lovers. If you’re looking online for a new puppy to add to your family, beware. Virginia’s Attorney General has received several reports of consumers entering into agreements and paying forth hundreds of dollars to buy a purebred puppy online only to learn that the puppy never existed.

As always if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. The Better Business Bureau urges consumers to conduct research on the seller, inspect an animal in person before paying money, and pay by credit card if you do make an online purchase. If you are looking for a new pet to add to your family, the Hume Society of the United States will refer the consumer to local shelters and non-profits for finding a reputable breeder. And of course, avoid buying pets from puppy mills.

REMINDR ABOUT DISABLED PARKING PLACARDS
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Remember, disabled parking privileges do not allow you to stop, stand or park where parking is prohibited, in spaces reserved for other special type of vehicles, or where it would clearly present a traffic hazard.

If a person parks in a space reserved for a disabled individual without displaying a disabled placard or plate, a fine of $100 to $500 could result if convicted of this offense.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Sheriff is the only locally elected constitutional law enforcement officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as provided in the Constitution of Virginia, and is elected by the citizens of his or her locality every four years. Accordingly, the duties of the sheriff are not spelled out in any one document, law, or regulation.

Law Enforcement – Sheriffs are responsible for primary local law enforcement in all counties without a police force, but also have responsibility for law enforcement in all localities in which they serve.

Jail Administration – The Code of Virginia provides that sheriffs are responsible for all locally operated jails. Sheriffs also sit on regional jail boards, and in some cases operate regional jails in Virginia.

Service to the Courts – Court services, including courthouse and courtroom security, the security and sequestering of the jurors, and the service of hundreds of thousands of court papers each year, are the responsibility of all Virginia's sheriffs.

In addition to these services, sheriffs are called upon to promote DARE programs and services for victims and witnesses of crime as well as participate in civil commitments to the citizens of their locality to protect the basic health and welfare of those citizens.
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CHECK US OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Twitter https://twitter.com/VSIInstitute
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute

We Want to Hear from You …

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IN THIS ISSUE …

Virginia’s Crime Rate……………2
Virginia Rules .......................2
Traffic Deaths in VA ..............2
Scholarship Deadline Approaching .......2
Annual Spring Conference........3
Puppy Fraud Alert ...............3
Did You Know?.....................3
Disabled Parking Placards .......3
Upcoming Drug Take Back Day ....4
Message from John W. Jones .......4