NEW SHERIFFS’ ORIENTATION SCHOOL

ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE

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This year’s Spring Conference is scheduled for April 20-22, 2022 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriot in Norfolk, VA. This important educational event is made possible through our associate and business members’ support of the VSI.

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PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN W. JONES

On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute, I hope you and your family had a wonderful start to the new year.

With the prospect of wintry conditions ongoing for the next month or so, I urge you to take extra care and caution when traveling on Virginia’s roadways.

If we do experience a winter storm, the best thing you can do is stay off the roads until conditions improve.

During the ongoing pandemic, criminals continue to find new and innovative ways to steal your personal information and possessions. To help protect your financial information and other items from falling into the wrong hands, I’ve included some information I hope you will find useful.

I want you to know it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI, and I urge you to stay safe and to contact your sheriff’s office if you have any questions about the subjects we discuss in this issue of the VSI newsletter, or if you have any other concerns about crime prevention or public safety efforts in your community.

No sheriff’s office can operate effectively without the support and cooperation of the people it serves. That’s why I’m so grateful for your continued support of the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute!

Sincerely,

John W. Jones, Executive Director
Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute
901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Newly elected sheriffs from around Virginia gathered at the New Sheriff Orientation School hosted by the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute on November 30-December 2, 2021 in Richmond.

The three-day training session included informational sessions on a variety of topics including conflict of interest, liability coverage, the Freedom of Information Act, media relations and legal and lawful employment.

Also, the newly elected sheriffs had a great opportunity to become familiar with the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute and the Virginia Sheriffs’ Association and get acquainted with experienced sheriffs who serve in positions of leadership for both organizations.

Overall, the New Sheriff Orientation School offered Virginia’s newly elected sheriffs an invaluable opportunity to improve their effectiveness as dedicated public safety officials — something from which every Virginian benefits.

NEW SHERIFFS’ ORIENTATION SCHOOL

PREVENTING CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

A growing number of car owners in Virginia and across the country are dealing with the theft of their vehicle’s catalytic converters, which are an integral part of a vehicle’s exhaust system. These components have been increasingly targeted for their precious metals because their value has increased during the pandemic. It can cost thousands to replace a catalytic converter.

Here are a few tips on how you can prevent catalytic converter theft:

- Park in well-lit areas.
- Park close to building entrances or in a high visibility location.
- If available, park your car in your garage and keep the door shut.
- Add video surveillance to the area where you normally park your car.
- Install a catalytic converter-specific security device or have it welded to the car frame. You can also engrave your car’s VIN number to the catalytic converter.
- Adjust the security system on your car, if already installed, to activate from vibrations, such as those produced by a saw.

MADD HONORS VA LAW ENFORCEMENT

One hundred Virginia law enforcement officers were among those honored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for their dedication to impaired driving enforcement and prosecution.

Virginia has some of the strongest drunk driving laws in the nation, which also apply to drugged driving. First-time offenders lose their driver’s license for a year, and have a mandatory interlock device when they begin driving again. A second conviction results in a three-year driver’s license suspension, and 20 days in jail is required if the second conviction happened within five years.

According to statistics provided by the Virginia DMV, the chance of being in an alcohol-related crash is one in six over the course of a lifetime. In 2019, 32% of all traffic fatalities in Virginia were alcohol-related.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM “SKIMMING”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines “skimming” as an event that occurs when devices are illegally installed on ATMs, point-of-sale (POS) terminals, or fuel pumps to capture data or record cardholders’ PINs. Criminals use this data to create fake debit cards or credit cards and then steal from victims’ accounts. Skimming is estimated to cost institutions and consumers more than $1 billion annually.

Here are a few tips offered by the FBI on what you can do to protect yourself from skimming when using a fuel pump, ATM, or POS terminal:

- Inspect ATMs and other card readers before using. Look for anything loose, crooked, damaged, or scratched. Don’t use the reader if you notice anything unusual.
- Pull at the edges of the keypad before entering your PIN. Then, cover the keypad when you enter your PIN to prevent cameras from recording your entry.
- Use ATMs in a well-lit, indoor location, which are less vulnerable targets.
- Be alert for skimming devices in tourist areas, which are popular targets.
- Use debit and credit cards with chip technology. In the U.S., there are fewer devices that steal chip data versus magnetic strip data.
- Avoid using your debit card when you have linked accounts. Use a credit card instead.
- Contact your financial institution if the ATM doesn’t return your card after you end or cancel a transaction.
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The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute solicits articles and comments from associate members of the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and comments should be directed to: John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute, 901 East Byrd Street, Suite 1301, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or phone (804) 225-7152.