



# NEWSLETTER

FALL EDITION 2015



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Executive Director

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# Be Wary of These Popular Scams



2015-2016

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# BE WARY OF THESE POPULAR SCAMS

The Better Business Bureau has identified the "Top 10 Scams of 2014." Scammers appear to be getting more creative in their tactics to convince people to send money or give out personal information. We've highlighted a few of the most prevalent scams below that you and other residents in your community should be aware of (to read the entire list, go online to <http://www.bbb.org/western-virginia/news-events/news-releases/2015/bbb-reveals-top-10-scams-of-2014/>):



### 1. The IRS/Back-Taxes Scam

You receive a call or voicemail from someone claiming to be IRS or other U.S. Government agent. They threaten to arrest you for overdue taxes unless you pay them right-away by wire transfer or prepaid debit card. The IRS will never call you and ask for payment in this manner!

### 2. Sweepstakes Scam

You're told you won a contest or the lottery or even the Publisher's Clearinghouse sweepstakes. All you have to do to claim your prize is pay some fees or taxes first. They may even send you a phony check to help you pay the fees. Remember — winning is free and you don't win sweepstakes you don't enter!

### 3. "Microsoft" Computer Repair Scam

You get a call or pop-up on your computer claiming to be from Microsoft, Windows, or another recognizable

computer company, stating you have a problem on your computer. They ask for access to your computer so they can fix it. Instead they install malware on your computer, start stealing your personal information, and then ask you to pay them for doing it! In some cases they have even frozen users out of their computers or encrypted their files, holding them ransom until payment is received.

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring also warns of continuing utility scams targeting Virginia consumers. According to his office, "scammers are banking on separating you from your money using phone calls threatening immediate disconnection of your electrical service if payment is not made on the spot." You should be aware that Dominion Virginia Power, Appalachian Power, and the Electric Cooperatives will NEVER demand payment over the phone or require payment of a prepaid debit card.

## TRAINING COMBATS CYBERBULLYING

Bedford County Sheriff Mike Brown joined the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) and the Safe Surfin' Foundation (SSF) to announce the release of cyberbullying training for parents and educators.

According to Sheriff Brown, "One in four

teens has experienced cyberbullying, according to the latest research, and one in six teens admits to cyberbullying others. Many studies point to a strong link between bullying and suicide.

Parents, teachers, and students need to recognize the dangers of bullying and

*(Continued on page 3)*

## “Cyber Bullying”

(Continued from page 2)

learn how to help students who are most at risk.” The new, online-based training program designed to help educators and parents constructively addresses this serious problem facing young people today.

The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute offered a cyberbullying presentation, “Cyberbullying: Our Children, Our Problem,” at the spring training conference in Roanoke. The interactive training program, provided as a resource for parents, teens, educators, and law enforcement, addressed ways to cope with and respond to cyberbullying, including effective strategies for empathy, communication, conflict resolution, and incident reporting.

## NORTHAMPTON COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF RECEIVES 2015 VALOR AWARD

The 2015 Deputy Sheriff Valor Award was presented to Northampton County Deputy Sheriff Christopher Forbes as a result of his actions taken on June 15, 2014 in response to a report about an overturned boat in the Chesapeake Bay. Thanks to Deputy Sheriff Forbes’ quick-thinking and courageous actions, all victims were located, rescued, and received urgent medical attention.



Deputy Sheriff Forbes has been with the Northampton County Sheriff’s Office since 2003. He was previously employed as a deputy sheriff with the Virginia Beach and Chesapeake Sheriff’s Offices. Prior to his law enforcement career, he served two years in the Virginia National Guard and eight years in the United States Army as a paratrooper.

This award is intended to recognize a deputy sheriff who has shown unusual initiative, exceptional dedication and courage in the performance of his/her duties to include, extraordinary judgment, bravery, lifesaving(s) and rescue(s). Deputy Sheriff Forbes received his award at the Annual Conference in September.

## VSA 2015 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE RECAP

From September 13-15, sheriffs from all across the Commonwealth, along with exhibitors and speakers, attended the 2015 Virginia Sheriffs’ Association Annual Conference held in Norfolk, Virginia.

Conference attendees benefited from a great program that focused on training and educational opportunities, as well as election and installation of new officers. It also offered plenty of networking activities available to sheriffs and attendees, and exhibits displayed the latest in services and technology.

In addition, numerous awards were presented at the conference in recognition of law enforcement heroes, including through H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Theft Program). This program combines three award competitions into one prestigious, highly competitive program representing four key areas in the fight against vehicle theft: Intelligence, Prevention, Enforcement and Recovery.

Many thanks to our Associate Members for making our 2015 annual conference — our Association’s largest annual event — a resounding success!



### Election Day Is Almost Here — Know Where the Candidates Stand on the Issues!

On November 3, 2015, thousands of Virginians will go the polls and cast their ballot for Virginia State Senate and House of Delegates representation and important local offices [including county sheriffs]. This is an important decision that could impact the future of public safety efforts across Virginia. And it’s vital that our elected officials, at all levels of government, understand the needs of law enforcement and corrections and the importance of allocating critical funds to promote public safety.

VSI is leading this vital effort to raise public awareness about the upcoming elections so citizens like you learn more about all the candidates and get out and cast your vote on November 3rd — either through absentee ballot or at the polls!

To find out what polling location you’re assigned to or to obtain an absentee ballot application form, please visit [elections.virginia.gov](http://elections.virginia.gov).

# 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 enjoyed your summer. As you receive your VSI Newsletter, children across the Commonwealth are already back to school and looking forward to Halloween.

I want you to know promoting public safety is our number one priority at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute. That's why I'm grateful for the continued feedback of Virginia residents like you on issues that could personally impact your ability to keep you and your family safe.

Fall in Virginia is a wonderful and active time for many Virginia residents, from the cooler days and beautiful fall foliage to school activities and festivals, and of course Halloween. To ensure this fall season is a safe and enjoyable one, I've included some practical safety tips if you decide to hit the trails in our state and national parks.

As always, it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI and we greatly appreciate the partnership of citizens like you in making sure our Commonwealth is a great place to live, work, and learn.

Thank you again for all you do to support the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute — have a great autumn and don't forget to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones".

John W. Jones, Executive Director  
Virginia Sheriffs' Institute  
701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706  
Richmond, VA 23219

## TIPS TO STAY SAFE HIKING ON VIRGINIA TRAILS

Virginia's numerous parks and hiking trails attract throngs of visitors during the fall months — many come to see the beautiful change in foliage. If you and your family take to the trails, we ask that you take some precautionary steps to ensure your safety. Here are some tips offered by the National Park Service in Virginia:

- Always drive the speed limit and slow down if you see an animal. Drive slowly in the fog since it will be hard to see cyclists, animals, or a stopped vehicle.
- Wear proper, sturdy footwear when hiking on an unpaved trail and never walk around a waterfall.
- Bring plenty of water with you to avoid dehydration.
- Never feed wildlife — it is illegal. And do not approach or startle bears.



## We Want to Hear from You ...

*Drop us a note, give us a call, or send us an email.*

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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, 701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706, Richmond, VA 23219-2512, or phone (804) 225-7152.

*The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute does not solicit donations by telephone.*