



NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION 2016



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VSI Welcomes 25 Newly-Elected Sheriffs!

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Newly-elected sheriffs at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute's New Sheriffs' School in Richmond.



2015-2016

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Executive Director
John W. Jones

VSI NEW SHERIFFS' SCHOOL

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) welcomed 25 new sheriffs — who make up 20% of Virginia's elected sheriffs — to the Commonwealth on January 1, 2016! Governor Terry McAuliffe was on hand to welcome Virginia's newly-elected sheriffs at the close of their training at the VSI New Sheriffs' School, held December 1-3 in Richmond.

Thanks to support from our members all across Virginia, we were able to hold a very comprehensive New Sheriffs' School which covered a vast array of information. The three-day training session included several information sessions on topics including: accounting practices, the Conflict of Interests Act, employment matters, the Freedom

of Information Act, training and record-keeping requirements, and the Department of Forensic Science.

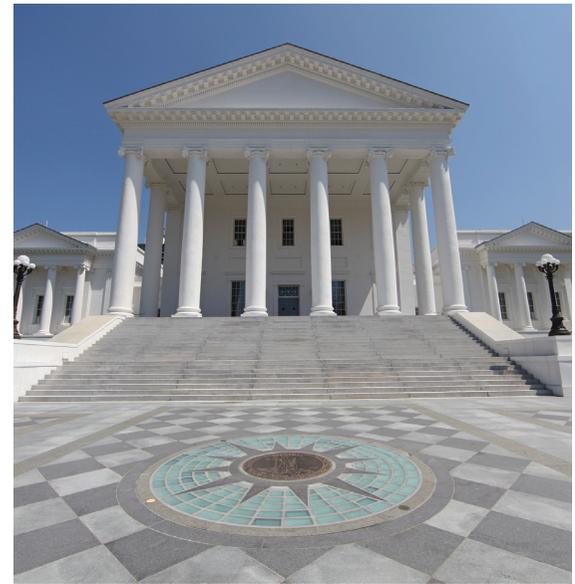
Also, our new sheriffs had a great opportunity to become familiar with the VSI and the Virginia Sheriffs' Association, and get acquainted with experienced sheriffs who serve in positions of leadership for both organizations.

Overall, the New Sheriffs' School offered Virginia's new sheriffs an invaluable opportunity to improve their effectiveness as dedicated public safety officials — something from which every Virginian benefits.

VIRGINIA SHERIFFS' LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2016

This year the sheriffs will work with members of the 2016 Virginia General Assembly to once again address the issue of low compensation for deputy sheriffs, which has led to a high turnover rate particularly for first-year deputies with an average turnover rate of 21.3% across Virginia. There are even hundreds of deputies and dispatchers who live at or near poverty levels. We are encouraged by the Governor's budget which includes funds for a 2% pay increase for deputies, "compression" pay and career development initiatives.

In addition, Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) will be working to ensure adequate funding and training to deal with mental health issues in the jail population and enhance the criminal justice system to deal with the ever-increasing challenges faced by law enforcement, the courts, and correctional systems. Virginia sheriffs serve on the frontlines of our Homeland



Security efforts; they made literally tens of thousands of criminal arrests last year and are responsible for court services and the security of jails across Virginia.

The VSA is the voice of Virginia's sheriffs and deputy sheriffs and currently has nearly 9,000 members in all of Virginia's counties and cities, including your community. The VSA Executive Director, John W. Jones, also serves as the registered lobbyist for the Virginia Sheriffs' Association.



LIKE THE VIRGINIA SHERIFFS' INSTITUTE ON FACEBOOK!

Do you have a Facebook account? So do we! The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute would really appreciate your "electronic approval"! Please visit our Facebook page today and like us at [www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute!](http://www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute)

\$750,000 GRANT TO PROMOTE LAW ENFORCEMENT- COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Governor Terry McAuliffe recently announced the availability of \$750,000 in Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds for training and equipment for local law enforcement agencies to help strengthen their relationship with their local communities in support of his “Policing in the 21st Century” initiative.

Police agencies, sheriff’s offices and regional training academies submitted grant proposals aimed at addressing, issues like, cultural diversity, de-escalation techniques, community relations and communications supports. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) administers Virginia’s JAG funds and will award the grants to successful applicants. This initiative is an important step to promoting greater trust and cooperation between communities and public safety officers.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

One of the many benefits the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute offers is our scholarship program. This award — which is funded 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. In fact, with the help of loyal members like you, we awarded 102 scholarships for 2015-2016 to Virginia’s youth.

Scholarship applications are currently available to be downloaded from our website or they may be picked up in your local sheriff’s office after January 31, 2016. In addition to the application, students must submit SAT/ACT scores, transcripts, a copy of the student’s voter registration card if the student is 18 and an essay. A full list of application materials can be found at <https://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/>. Applications are due May 1, 2016.

SHOP TO SUPPORT VIRGINIA SHERIFFS



We have joined with Amazon to create a new way to support the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute. AmazonSmile, a website operated by the Amazon Smile Foundation, provides a simple, automatic process when checking out to support our dedicated sheriffs and deputies at no additional cost to you.

When shopping at AmazonSmile, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection, and convenient shopping experience as the Amazon.com website you know, but with the opportunity to request that Amazon donate a portion of the purchase price to VSI.

To participate, go to smile.amazon.com and select the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute as your chosen charity — and every eligible purchase will result in a donation to VSI!

WINTER WEATHER DRIVING TIPS



Here are a few tips, provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation, to help ensure you stay safe driving on Virginia roadways this winter:

- Before beginning your trip, know the current road and weather conditions.
- Make sure your car is winter ready (check your brakes and tires, battery and ignition system, antifreeze, lights, windshield wipers, and oil; and properly lubricate door locks to prevent freezing).
- Clear ice and snow from all windows and lights — even the hood and roof— before driving.
- Always wear a seatbelt.
- Leave a few minutes early.
- Be aware of potentially icy areas.
- Leave plenty of room for stopping between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Do not pass a snowplow or spreader.
- Keep an emergency winter driving kit in your car.

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 joyous and safe holiday season, and that you are enjoying your New Year thus far.

With the prospect of winter finally making its presence known in the region, I urge you to take extra care and

caution when traveling on Virginia's roadways. I've included some tips on how to prepare your car for winter road conditions and drive safely.

It is my privilege and honor to serve the great Commonwealth of Virginia. The men and women of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute are committed to keeping residents and visitors safe during this winter season. At the same time, we are focused on bringing much-needed attention to improving the working conditions and compensation of our hardworking deputy sheriffs, and enhancing the criminal justice system to deal with the ever-increasing challenges faced by law enforcement, the courts, and correctional system.

To continue to be effective at combating crime in our communities, we need your help. That's why I'm asking you to report crimes and suspicious activity when you see them so that we can do our very best to keep this community a safe place to work, play, live, and raise our families.

I deeply appreciate your support — and Happy New Year!

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



TRAFFIC FATALITIES ON THE RISE IN VIRGINIA

As part of the nationwide "Drive to Save Lives" campaign, Virginia sheriffs joined with other law enforcement officers throughout the state to step up enforcement on our state roadways. Drivers saw an increased presence of law enforcement on major highways and secondary routes conducting DUI checkpoints and roving patrols.

Last year saw an increase in the number of traffic fatalities in Virginia, so the goal of this campaign is to increase overall awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and the importance of buckling up and complying with speed limits.

We are grateful to our members for driving safely and for complying with our "Move Over" law, which requires drivers to change to another travel lane or, when unable to, to cautiously pass emergency personnel stopped on the side of the road. Virginia law also includes highway maintenance vehicles and tow trucks equipped with flashing amber lights.

Highway fatalities rank as one of the top 12 causes of death in the United States and it is the leading cause of death among teens. Yet, most crashes are preventable, so this figure must and can be reduced significantly if more drivers paid attention and complied with the law.

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.