



NEWSLETTER

FALL EDITION 2018



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VIRGINIA BOASTS LOWEST RECIDIVISM RATES IN NATION

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2018-2019

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John W. Jones

VIRGINIA BOASTS LOW RECIDIVISM RATES

For the second year in a row, Virginia was ranked as top in the nation for lowest recidivism rates. Sheriff's offices across the state are offering inmates opportunities to rehabilitate and educate themselves while they are incarcerated to help make a productive transition from jail to the community.

According to Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid: "The list of life skills, education, and self-awareness programs we offer inmates during their incarceration continues to grow." From helping inmates to obtain their GEDs and providing free books to offering inmates access to yoga and drug addiction programs, county and city jails are working hard to continue the trend of low recidivism rates in Virginia.

Here are just a few examples of sheriff's offices working to change minds and teach



inmates how to make better decisions. In May, a Norfolk jail inmate became the first woman in six years to earn her GED. Chesterfield jail officials have implemented a groundbreaking Heroin Addiction Recovery Program, which has become a model for other jails across the Commonwealth. In addition, the Norfolk Sheriff's Office adopted a program that offers yoga to inmates who say it's helping them with impulse control.

MORE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS WORKING IN VA SCHOOLS

In an effort to increase security in Virginia schools, Governor Ralph Northam has made available an additional \$1.3 million to fund school resource officer (SRO) and school security officer (SSO) positions.

The maximum amount of funding for School Resource Officer positions has been increased from \$50,000 to \$70,000 and the maximum amount of funding for SSO positions has been increased from \$22,000 to \$35,000. Furthermore, localities will now be able to provide in-kind services to meet the composite match requirement of the grant. These changes will make grant funds more accessible to localities that may currently be struggling to fund SRO/SSO positions.

"Virginia has a robust system of educators, school counselors and school psychologists

who are already in place to ensure our students feel safe and secure," said Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education and Co-Chair of the Work Group on Students Safety. "SROs and SSOs also play an additional role in keeping our schools safe, not just because of the security function they provide, but also because of the mentorship they offer to our youth."

"SROs and SSOs are an important part of school safety, and can play a key role in supporting school threat assessment teams," said Dr. James Lane, State Superintendent for Public Instruction. "We ask a lot of our teachers and school leaders. By having these officers present, our educators can focus more of their efforts on supporting students in the teaching and learning process."

STOP BY VSA'S ONLINE STORE!

Have you visited the VSA online store yet? You will find high-quality men's and women's apparel, items for hunting, and other items that are perfect for gifts. This holiday season we will

be offering a limited time selection of exceptional gifts so stop by the online store soon before these items sell out. Visit the store at: vsa.thepromomall.com





PARENTING CLASSES OFFERED TO INMATES

In an effort to continue the positive trend of lower recidivism rates in Virginia, city jails are implementing innovative programs to help prepare inmates for life after jail.

The Danville City Jail is now offering an eight-week parenting course for female inmates called "Parenting Wisely." The program is similar to the existing "Inside Out Dad" classes already offered to male inmates. The goal of both programs is to educate inmates who have children about how to improve their parenting skills so that when they are released, they can raise their children in a more positive manner.

OCTOBER IS SCHOOL BUS SAFETY MONTH

October 22-26, 2018 is National School Bus Safety Week. I'd like to remind motorists to slow down and be on the lookout for buses in the morning and in the afternoon hours after school lets out.

Children are most at risk when they get on and off the bus. When a school bus flashes red, you must stop. And drivers are required by law to stop for as long as the bus' sign is extended, unless separated by grass or a concrete median.



FALL DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

As we usher in a new season, I want to make Virginia residents aware of some potential hazards on our roadways, particularly given unpredictable weather changes, falling leaves, and the end of daylight savings time.

Here are some tips offered by the Virginia National Guard to help keep you and your family safe this fall:

- **Watch out for wet leaves on roadways** which can cause slippery conditions.
- **Remain extra alert at the end of daylight saving time**, since motorists will be dealing with reduced visibility, and keep on the lookout for pedestrians, cyclists and road workers.
- Given weather and temperature changes, **make sure tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.**
- **Have a good pair of sunglasses readily available to counter daytime glare**, and consider lenses with anti-reflective coating to reduce glare when night driving can't be avoided.
- **Plan ahead for wet conditions:** Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working condition. If driving on a road with excess water, slow down and avoid sudden movements with the steering wheel or brake pedal. If you feel like you're floating, steer straight and gently release the gas pedal until you feel the tires make contact with the road surface. In an especially heavy downpour you may want to pull off the road until it's safe to continue.

SCAMMERS NOW TARGETING MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES

In April, the federal government began sending new Medicare cards to beneficiaries in an effort to stem identity theft. Up until this change, Social Security numbers have been imprinted on Medicare beneficiaries' benefit cards, ultimately putting millions at risk of identity theft. Social Security numbers are now being replaced with a randomly generated Medicare beneficiary identifier.

Now phone scammers are using this as an opportunity to target Medicare beneficiaries by calling enrollees and telling them they need to pay for their new cards. Scammers then request bank account information and Social Security numbers. If victims refuse to make a payment, scammers are telling them that they will not receive their new card.

New Medicare cards are free, and when enrollees receive their new card in the mail, they should give their new number to their health care providers and keep their card in a safe place. Then enrollees should destroy their old cards. **Beneficiaries should also be aware: Medicare never calls enrollees for Medicare numbers or other personal information**, unless the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid have been granted permission in advance.

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 are excited to usher in the fall season in the Commonwealth of Virginia. While fall means back to school for kids in our community, it also brings some extra risks.

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 driving tips to help you navigate changing weather and temperatures, and the end of daylight savings time. I hope you'll find this information valuable.

I want you to know public safety is the number one priority of Virginia sheriffs and all of us here at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute. That's why I'm grateful for the continued feedback of residents like you on such critical issues as public safety, crime prevention, and other law enforcement-related issues in our state.

It is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI, and I urge you 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 any other concerns about crime prevention or public safety efforts in your community.

I deeply appreciate your involvement as a loyal supporter of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute.

Sincerely,

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

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

DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY

Virginia's next drug take-back day will take place on October 27 between 10:00-2:00 pm. This state-wide event is an effort to prevent prescription drug abuse in our communities and to keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams, since wastewater treatment plants cannot remove many compounds found in medications.

A few things to keep in mind if you would like to participate: 1) It's anonymous and free; 2) prescription and over-the counter medications will be accepted; and 3) **Please do not give intravenous solutions, injectables, or needles.**

In 2017, 1,400 Virginians died from drug overdoses — a number that far exceeds car crashes and gun deaths. Last October, Americans turned in 900,000 pounds of prescription drugs at participating sites.

Drug take-back days are important because our state, along with many other states, is experiencing an opioid epidemic. Most people who abuse prescription painkillers indicate that they obtained the prescription drugs from friends or relatives for free.

Residents in communities all across Virginia are urged to find out if their community is participating in a prescription drug take-back event and if so to drop off their unused, unwanted, or expired medications for safe disposal at their local law enforcement agencies.

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We Want to Hear from You ...



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The VSI 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.