



Newsletter
Summer Edition 2023



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IN THIS ISSUE ...

Move-Over Law Expanded	2
Anti-Swatting Law	2
Noah's Law	2
Scholarships Awarded	2
New Illicit Drug Poses Challenges.....	3
VSI and VSA.....	3
Certification Program	3
Flood Safety Tips	3
This Scam Just Won't Go Away	4
National Night Out.....	4
Message from John W. Jones.....	4

NEW LAWS TAKE EFFECT





2023-2024

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Pittsylvania County

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Henrico County

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Fluvanna County

Executive Director
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**We Want to
Hear from You ...**



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VIRGINIA'S MOVE OVER LAW EXPANDED



markings. So, if you see someone who has pulled over to change a tire or is having car trouble, you are urged to do your best to change lanes to avoid them.

There have been too many incidences of law enforcement, emergency response personnel, as well as everyday drivers, who have been injured or killed because drivers refuse to move over. This new law is just another effort to stop preventable tragedies from occurring on our roadways.

Failure to follow the Move Over Law counts as reckless driving and can warrant fines, license suspension, or even jail.

On July 1, an expansion of our state's Move Over Law takes effect. As a reminder, motorists are mandated to switch lanes if they see law enforcement or emergency vehicles on the side of the road. Under the new law, drivers are asked to move over, or slow down, if possible, for any car parked on the side of the road, regardless of its

GOVERNOR SIGNS ANTI-SWATTING BILL

Another key bill that passed in the General Assembly is an anti-swatting bill that was signed into law by Governor Youngkin. "Swatting" is the term used for when a fake emergency call is made to law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services and their personnel respond. The new law will make swatting calls punishable by up to one year in jail.

Increasingly, schools are being hit with these false threats. Young people, in particular, are calling and issuing bomb threats at schools. These calls divert critical resources from where they are needed the most.

There are more severe penalties if someone is injured or dies as a result of the fake emergency.

"NOAH'S LAW" BEGINS JULY 1

With strong support in both chambers, HB 1892, also called "Noah's Law," was signed into law by Governor Youngkin. Noah's Law, named after 2-year-old kidnapping victim Noah Trout, implements harsher penalties for kidnapping a minor.

This law re-classifies the felony of abducting a minor by a stranger from a class 5 felony, with sentences up to 10 years in prison, to a class 2 felony, which requires a minimum sentence of 20 years in prison.

2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We are very pleased to announce that 55 scholarships were awarded to deserving students across the Commonwealth pursuing a career in law enforcement, thanks to the generosity of citizen supporters like you.

One of our most recent recipients is Haley A. Haydon, of Richmond County, Virginia. Haley is planning on attending Virginia Wesleyan University where she will be pursuing a course of study in criminal justice.



Haley Haydon receives a scholarship presented by Sheriff Stephan B. Smith, Richmond County, Virginia.

EMERGING THREAT OF ILLICIT USE OF VETERINARY SEDATIVE

The opioid crisis continues to evolve, and it is now presenting new challenges to already overwhelmed communities and law enforcement in Virginia. There is a new drug called xylazine, a highly dangerous sedative used by veterinarians, that is making its way into illicit drugs. It is used specifically to sedate large horses and cattle.

The drug is commonly known as “tranq” or “tranq dope,” and unlike fentanyl, it does not respond to opioid overdose antidotes like naloxone (Narcan). If someone takes this drug, they can experience severe soft-tissue wounds that could lead to amputation. As if the opioid crisis could not get any worse, fentanyl and other illicit drugs are now being mixed with xylazine, and it makes fentanyl even deadlier. It is currently not considered a controlled substance, so law enforcement officers are hampered in their ability to crack down on its unlawful use.

Right now, Congress is considering legislation that would give law enforcement officers more authority to crack down on the illicit use of this drug while protecting its important use as a veterinary sedative. As you know, drug traffickers continue to flood the U.S. with deadly drugs and law enforcement officers in Virginia are committed to identifying and arresting these criminals who are peddling these dangerous drugs.

VSI & VSA: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) is the educational arm of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) in which citizens, like yourself, are eligible to become members. The proceeds supporting the VSI are used exclusively for the many training and educational programs held each year and our annual scholarship program. All contributions to the VSI are tax deductible.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) is an organization that represents the interests of sheriffs and law enforcement before the General Assembly in Virginia. It is a professional trade organization of which contributions are not tax deductible. We send out appeals on their behalf twice a year.

2023 VSI CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

VSI recognized and presented participants of the 2023 Certification Program a certificate of completion at its spring conference in April. The Certification Program is offered by VSI to recognize the continued individual professional development of Virginia sheriffs and deputies. Certification through this voluntary program provides recognition of a sheriff or deputy's commitment to excellence, life-long learning, and advancement of public safety as a profession.



FLOOD SAFETY TIPS-THIS BEARS REPEATING



Here in Virginia, we have the potential to experience many different forms of flooding. It can occur due to high tides in coastal areas, heavy rain, and overflowing rivers. Flooding can develop slowly or quickly without warning. It can cause deaths, injuries and significant and costly property damage.

Be prepared by creating a flood emergency kit consisting of needed medications, bandages, fresh water, canned food, a flashlight with batteries, and a battery powered radio. Here are a few actions you can take during and after a flood:

- Listen to your local radio stations and evacuate if instructed by local authorities. Lock your home if you leave and turn off utilities, power, and gas.
- Do not walk or drive through any flood.
- **Don't drown, turn around!** Vehicles can get swept away in moving water that is just 12 inches high.
- Avoid contact with floodwaters as they may be contaminated or contain sharp objects.
- Dispose of any items that came into contact with floodwaters.

A 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 eager to jumpstart your summer plans in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

If you are planning to take a vacation and travel out of town for any period of time, I urge you to keep your travel plans private — do not broadcast them on social

media. We know that thieves will use Facebook and other social media sites to target the homes of people who post their travels, so do not be an easy target. Just as important, now that school is out, know who your children and grandchildren are with and know the parents of their friends.

Summer is also a time when opportunist thieves seek out property left unattended and unsecured, such as bicycles, lawn items, garden tools, car keys, to name a few. So please, ensure your property is secure, especially overnight, and remember to close and lock your windows and doors. It just takes a second for a thief to steal something which has been left lying unattended, and by taking a few moments to ensure property is secure, you can reduce the risk of falling victim to such a crime.

I want you to know 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 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 is why I am so grateful for your continued support of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

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

ONGOING PHONE SCAM STILL TRICKING PEOPLE

Scammers continue to return to a tried-and-true scam that involves posing as deputies. Victims report receiving phone calls from someone claiming to be a sheriff's deputy who then threatens to arrest them if they do not pay a fine.

The scammers claim the person did not show up for jury duty or to serve on a grand jury. To avoid arrest, they are offered an opportunity to pay a fine over the phone using a prepaid debit card, a gift card, or an electronic payment.

People who have received these calls report they are told convincing information like the name and location of a courthouse, case numbers, and badge numbers — as well as personal information like their birthdays, home addresses, and maiden names, and they also may have the ability to spoof the phone number from the sheriff's office, so it appears like the number is legitimate.

As a reminder, if you are scheduled for grand jury or jury duty, you will receive a letter in the mail. Also, please know that deputies will not contact citizens for payment or personal information over the phone. If you receive one of these calls, you are urged to contact your sheriff's office.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

August 1, 2023 is National Night Out, a day meant to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, town watch, neighborhood watch, and other anti-crime efforts. National Night Out was introduced in August of 1984 through an already established network of law enforcement agencies, neighborhood watch groups, civic groups, state and regional crime prevention associations, and volunteers across the nation. The nationwide event is designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness;
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs;
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and
- Send a message to criminals, letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

For more information, visit www.natw.org.

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.