Newsletter

Summer Edition 2024

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Here is What Happened in the 2024 General Assembly

NEW LAWS PASSED BY VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Governor Youngkin signed two new firearm bills into law this spring that are geared specifically toward public safety. **HB36** from Delegate Rodney Willet holds parents and guardians criminally responsible for allowing a minor access to a firearm if the parent or guardian knows the minor has been deemed a threat by a school assessment or has violent felony charges. This bill was brought in response to a tragic incident in which a young girl was shot and killed by a classmate who used his father's gun when his father knew he was violent and a threat.

HB22 from Delegate Mike Jones, and the identical **SB210** from Senator Russet Perry, create a felony for possession or sale of an auto sear, a device that turns an ordinary handgun into a fully automatic machine gun.

These devices have become increasingly available and used in violent crime.

SB 726 requires every school, including public elementary and secondary schools, to have a supply of opioid overdose reversal treatments, like Narcan, on hand. This bill also requires schools to have two doses of naloxone and a school nurse or other staff member trained to administer it. In addition, SB 726 recommends that students complete an opioid overdose prevention and reversal program before graduation.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Tuesday, August 6, 2024, 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.

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.

According to the National Night Out's official website, "millions of neighbors take part in National Night Out across thousands of communities from all fifty states, U.S. territories, and military bases worldwide on the first Tuesday in August (Texas and select areas celebrate on the first Tuesday in October)."

SPECIAL THANKS!

Sheriffs from all across the Commonwealth, along with exhibitors and speakers, attended the 2024 Virginia Sheriffs' Institute Spring Conference and Exhibition, held on April 24-26, 2024 at the Williamsburg Lodge in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. This year's conference provided an important forum for sheriffs, deputies, and sheriff's office staff to discuss legislation relating to their office and duties that passed during the 2024 session of the General Assembly. In addition, numerous exhibitors at the conference demonstrated and displayed the latest technologies and items for sheriffs' offices.

The Williamsburg Lodge presented a historical venue for this important event and now the sheriffs are looking forward to their fall conference later this year. Many thanks to our Associate and Business Members for making this year's spring meeting a resounding success.

2024-2025

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Dickenson County

Sheriff Eric B. Hess
Fluvanna County

Executive Director
John W. Jones

We Want to Hear from You ...

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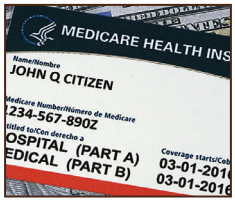
2024 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Frederick County Sheriff Lenny Millholland presents VSI Scholarships

We are very pleased to announce that 49 scholarships were awarded to deserving students across the Commonwealth pursuing a career of service in law enforcement. One of our most recent scholarship award recipients is Abigail M. Mauck, of Frederick County, Virginia. Abigail is planning on attending James Madison University where she will be pursuing a course of study in criminal justice.

Full-time students are awarded $1,000 scholarships; part-time students are awarded $500 scholarships. That is an impressive $47,000 going toward education costs. Your support is the reason we have had such tremendous success with our scholarship program year after year! VSI is the only organization in Virginia helping the state's law enforcement students with criminal justice scholarships.

HOW TO PREVENT MEDICARE FRAUD



Medicare fraud is a rampant and costly problem. It is estimated to cost $60 billion a year. A Medicare card contains a Medicare number that is unique to each beneficiary. Many older Americans carry their Medicare card in their wallets as proof of insurance, which provides a great opportunity for identity thieves to steal personal information.

If an individual's card falls into the wrong hands it could set up identity theft and fraudulent benefit claims submitted to the Medicare system on a card holder's behalf. That's why VSI is leading the charge in our state to educate citizens on the growing dangers of identity theft and inform you on what you can do to protect yourself and your family members from identity thieves.

Here are a few quick tips:

1. Medicare will first contact you through the mail if it does need to reach you.
2. If you receive a call from someone claiming to be a Medicare representative and you are unsure if it is legitimate, hang up and call the toll-free number on the back of your Medicare card.
3. Do not carry your card or if you or your family member feels the need to do so, make a photocopy of the card and cut or black out all but the four last digits.
4. Review your or your family member's Medicare summary to ensure that the list of procedures and services listed are accurate. If you notice anything suspicious or wrong, call the Inspector General's fraud hotline at 800-447-8477.

SUMMERTIME CRIME

The summer months provide criminals with unique opportunities to commit crimes against unsuspecting victims. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, "the most common pattern for household property crimes was that victimization occurred at higher rates during the summer than during other seasons."

With rising temperatures, come additional steps you should take to keep you and your belongings safe from would-be criminals seeking to capitalize on people taking vacations and leaving cars vulnerable to theft.

Here are some things you can do to reduce the risk of falling victim to crime this summer:

- Keep your vehicles locked with the windows up at all times and remove all valuables.
- To avoid home improvement scams, never agree to pay for the work until it has been completed, and never allow someone offering to perform an unscheduled home repair to gain access to your home.
- Keep all the doors to your house locked, including garages and sheds.
- If you are taking a vacation, ask a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail and newspapers and keep an eye on your house while you are away.
- Do not post on social media that you will be out of town.
- Put lights on timers to give the impression that someone is home.

SNAKES AND HIKING

Virginia boasts a large number of amazing parks, lakes, and trails to explore. When out in nature, you can guarantee a creature is nearby that you do not interact with in your daily life, such as a snake.

Out of the estimated 30 snake species in Virginia, three snake species are venomous. These include the timber rattlesnake, copperhead, and water moccasin (also known as the cottonmouth). Patterns and colors can differ between snake species but generally, the snakes noted above all have triangle-shaped heads and elliptical pupils, similar to a cat. These are the typical identifiers of poisonous snakes.

Most snakes are harmless, but even those bites can cause an infection or allergic reaction. It is best to stay on the trail when hiking as snakes prefer places to hide and hunt. If you see a snake on a trail, simply stay back and give it space to slither away.

A Message From VSI Executive Director John W. Jones

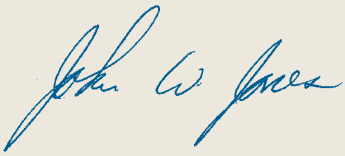
On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI), I hope you and your family are eager to jumpstart your summer plans in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I want to ensure you and your family have all the tools you need to enjoy your summer with family and friends, while also staying safe. That is why you will see some tips inside your newsletter that will help protect you and your property from opportunistic criminals this summer.

Of course, during these hot and humid summer months, when many of you may be working on outdoor projects or gardening, it is also important that you remember to wear appropriate clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat, take frequent water breaks, and apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. If you are driving, never leave kids or pets unattended in a vehicle.

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,



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VSI ANNOUNCES 2024 CLASS OF THE VSI CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

VSI recognized and presented participants of the 2024 Certification Program a certificate of completion at the 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.

PLANNED GIVING

A planned gift can provide the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute with the reliable source of funds we need to carry out our mission to support training and educational programs for sheriffs and their deputies and give them the tools they need to do their jobs more effectively. It may also help reduce your taxes or possibly reduce taxes for your loved ones should you decide to make a gift through your will.

There is more to a legacy gift than just tax benefits. It is a strong statement on your vision for the future of Virginia communities and makes a significant impact on our success and our organization's future. A charitable bequest is one of the easiest ways you can leave a lasting impact on Virginia's sheriffs and deputies. The following are three types of bequests: Wills or Living Trusts, Retirement Plans, and Life Insurance.

If you would like to receive free information that can help you prepare for the important discussion on planned giving with your attorney, please call our office at (804) 225-7152 at your convenience, Monday through Friday. Should you wish to discuss making a planned gift to the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, your inquiry will be completely non-binding and strictly confidential.

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.