It’s hard to believe that a cool but busy Virginia summer has already passed us by, and children across our beautiful commonwealth are already back in school and full of anticipation for Halloween. It’s also almost time to take part in Virginia’s 2014 Elections by going to the polls to vote on Tuesday, November 4th.

Whatever the time of year, your Sheriffs’ Office is on duty to serve our community, and we appreciate your support. As we highlight in this issue of the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute Newsletter, we are facing the growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in Virginia, and deputies are working hard to push back against this threat to our public health and safety.

There are also many things to be thankful for these days, from the cool, comfortable weather and autumn colors to school activities, football games, trips to the orchard for apples and pumpkins, festivals of all kinds and of course, Halloween. Inside this issue, we’ve included some practical tips to help us experience all the fall season and its activities have to offer safely and enjoyably.

On behalf of everyone here at the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute, 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 us — have a wonderful and safe Virginia fall!

Sincerely,

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

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.
As highlighted in our Winter issue of the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute Newsletter (see “Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies Take Part in National Drug Take-Back Day”), great progress has been made across the Commonwealth in dealing with misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. At the same time, however, Virginia law enforcement faces the very serious -- and growing -- problem of methamphetamine production and use.

According to the Virginia Drug Control Policy, the number of methamphetamine lab seizures in Virginia increased a staggering 958% from 2008 to 2011, from just 19 busts to over 200! This indicates the huge trend, and ask for your support in the spread of small, secretive labs. We tend to concentrate their production, prescription drugs. At the same time, however, Virginia law enforcement faces the very serious -- and growing -- problem of methamphetamine production and use.

This is exactly the type of mobile operation Washington County Sheriff Fred Newman's deputies discovered and successfully raided in Abingdon earlier this year, resulting in five suspects being charged with 21 felony counts of methamphetamine production, possession, and conspiracy.

And in Accomack County, Sheriff Todd Godwin's Office, in cooperation with the Eastern Shore Drug Task Force, the Virginia State Police, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, recently busted a local methamphetamine production operation, yielding four arrests on multiple charges, including manufacturing methamphetamine with a child under 15 present.

So, while drug abuse in Virginia overall is below the national average, in the case of methamphetamine in particular, Virginia’s Sheriffs are increasingly challenged by the spread of small, secretive labs. We will continue to monitor this alarming trend, and ask for your support in reporting any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement officials.
VIRGINIA SHERIFFS FACE RISING CHALLENGE OF METHAMPHETAMINE ABUSE

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According to the Virginia Drug Control Policy, the number of methamphetamine lab seizures in Virginia increased a staggering 958% from 2008 to 2011, from just 19 busts to over 200! This indicates the huge challenge faced by our Sheriffs in dealing with this dangerous, destructive substance that ruins health and wrecks lives. While meth producers previously tended to concentrate their production, a new trend sees so-called “one pot” labs, where a limited amount is made before moving to another site to reduce the likelihood of discovery.

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Safety starts at home—a busy place during the fall. Falling leaves mean raking, bagging, and cleaning gutters. Be sure to dress properly for outside work, keeping in mind the variable autumn weather. Be careful with mowers and other maintenance equipment, especially when using ladders, and remember to lift with your legs when hefting bags of leaves, etc. Have your chimney or furnace inspected to avoid dangers when heating your home.

When out and about, especially when driving during the morning and afternoon, be mindful of children making their way to and from school. Help crossing guards and bus drivers protect our kids at busy intersections and drop-offs by obeying their signals, and be careful of slippery wet leaves on the road surface.

Halloween is just a few weeks away—you can help ensure it is an enjoyable experience for children and families by encouraging safe activities. Check with your local community for Trick-or-treat schedules and drop-offs by obeying their signals, and be careful of slippery wet leaves on the road surface.

When shopping at www.smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, but with the opportunity to make purchases online at Amazon! AmazonSmile provides a simple, automatic process when checking out to make a donation to our dedicated Sheriffs and Deputies at no additional cost.

VIRGINIA VOTES: 2014 ELECTIONS ARE NOVEMBER 4TH

With Virginia’s Election Day 2014 just around the corner on Tuesday, November 4th, the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute urges you to familiarize yourself with all the candidates and the issues and cast your ballot for individuals who understand the needs of law enforcement and the importance of allocating critical funds to promote public safety.

Good governance and smart policy start with educated voters, so take advantage of resources for learning about the candidates and their positions. Study all the candidates’ websites and contact them, ask important questions, attend debates, be informed and know your choices.

To find out what polling location you’re assigned to or to obtain an absentee ballot, please visit the Virginia State Board of Elections website at: www.sbe.virginia.gov and be sure to vote on November 4th!

LIKE THE VIRGINIA SHERIFFS’ INSTITUTE ON FACEBOOK!

Do you have a Facebook account? So do we! The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute has set a goal of reaching 500 “likes” on our Facebook page, and we’d really appreciate your “electronic approval” as well! Please visit our Facebook page today and help us reach 500 likes at www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute!
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From September 14-16, Sheriffs from across Virginia gathered together at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel for the Virginia Sheriffs’ Association’s Annual Conference and Exhibition. The Conference hosted more than 500 sheriffs, deputies, exhibitors and guests and represents the Association’s largest annual event.

Conference attendees benefited from a great program with an array of presentations relating to criminal justice and sheriff’s office management, including PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) and its impact on jails, lawful employment practices, Sikh cultural competency, mental health issues in jails and conflict of interest laws affecting sheriffs. The training and educational programs were sponsored by the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute. Attendees also had the opportunity to interact with numerous exhibitors displaying the latest in law enforcement equipment and merchandise.

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