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 eager to welcome the return of spring to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Of course many Virginia residents and their families will be taking to the roadways, enjoying the change of season, and exploring all of the wonderful family-oriented events, parks, and scenery Virginia has to offer. So I encourage drivers to be extra vigilant, especially as this time of year brings many out-of-state visitors to our area.

In addition, leading up to the busy prom and graduation season, Virginia Sheriffs will be sending a message to students throughout the Commonwealth: underage drinking is not legal and will not be tolerated. That’s why law enforcement officers in your community will be stepping up enforcement efforts to make sure everyone’s safe during this time of celebration for students and their families. In addition, they will be working closely with school officials to stress the importance of making responsible decisions that will prevent alcohol-related crashes and ensure our teens stay safe and alcohol-free on the roads.

I want you to know it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI and I urge you to contact me if you have any questions about anything we discuss in this issue of the VSI newsletter.

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

Sincerely,

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

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU GIVES VSI 100% CHARITY ACCOUNTABILITY RATING

The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute has met all twenty standards of charity accountability of the Better Business Bureau (BBB). The BBB Wise Giving Alliance Standards for Charity Accountability were developed to assist donors in making sound giving decisions and to foster public confidence in charitable organizations.

The standards seek to encourage fair and honest solicitation practices, to promote ethical conduct by charitable organizations and to advance support of philanthropy. VSI’s report is accessible using the following link: http://www.bbb.org/charity-reviews/richmond/police-and-firefighter/virginia-sheriffs-institute-in-richmond-va-7457

We Want to Hear from You ...

Drop us a note, give us a call, or send us an email.

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(804) 225-7162 fax
vsavi@virginiasheriffs.org

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The Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute does not solicit donations by telephone.

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VA LEGISLATURE TACKLES ISSUE OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS ON CAMPUSES

Sexual assaults on college campuses are indeed a serious and growing problem. In an effort to address this issue, several bills were introduced in the 2015 Virginia General Assembly — HB 1343 (Delegate Filler-Corn), HB 1785 (Delegate Massie) and SB 712 (Senator Black) — that would require campus and local law enforcement to report sexual assault crimes on college campuses to the local Commonwealth Attorney within 48 hours of the reported incident.

In a recent statewide poll, more than nine out of 10 Virginians think colleges and universities should be required to report campus sexual assaults to police.

The victims of sexual assault on our college campuses should know that crimes they report will receive no less scrutiny than crimes reported by citizens in the community as a whole.

According to the Virginia Sheriffs’ Association’s president, Lunenburg County Sheriff Arthur Townsend, “These bills had the full early support of the sheriffs from across the Commonwealth, and we applaud their passage.”

MOVE OVER OR SLOW DOWN WHEN APPROACHING EMERGENCY VEHICLES

On the national level, traffic crashes and incidents in which a vehicle hits a worker on the roadside are the leading causes of on-duty injuries and deaths for law enforcement, firefighters, and towing and recovery personnel. Unfortunately, many motorists are unaware of Virginia’s “Move Over” law and raising much-needed awareness about this law is critical to protecting the lives of emergency responders.

Virginia’s “Move Over” law, which took effect in 2002, allows workers who are protecting and serving our community to do their jobs with a little more safety and security. The law requires motorists who are approaching an emergency vehicle that is displaying flashing, blinking or alternating blue, red or amber lights on a highway to proceed with caution. If possible, drivers should move into a lane not adjacent to the stationary vehicle.

Violation of the law is punishable as a traffic infraction. A second or subsequent violation is punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. If the violation results in damage to property of another person the court may order the suspension of the driver’s license for no more than one year. If the violation resulted in injury to another person the court may suspend the driver’s license for no more than two years.

Be especially cautious during periods of limited visibility or nighttime when it is extremely difficult to see and judge conditions — state law requires headlights when wipers are on.

There should be no question in the minds of students everywhere that reports of sexual assault will be given due consideration and receive all law enforcement resources that are available to all citizens.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1, 2015!

One of the many benefits the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute offers to Grayson County 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. “We’ve seen firsthand in Virginia that animal fighting is associated with other serious crimes such as drug distribution, possession of illegal alcohol or firearms, assaults, and illegal gambling. There’s also evidence that abuse of animals or exposure to animal abuse, especially by young people, can be predictive of future abusive or criminal behavior.”

The unit’s first project stemmed from a 2014 rights law created by “Bailey’s Law,” which helps ensure that customers have complete and accurate information about the health and history of a dog or cat before purchase and gives consumers recourse if an animal is later found to have significant health problems. Partnering with the Humane Society of the United States, the Animal Law unit sent a letter and fact sheet to Virginia pet stores on these important consumer rights involving the purchase of animals.

“Move Over” (Continued from page 2)

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/

To all citizens in Grayson County and all across our state for abiding by this important law that helps keep our deputies and other law enforcement officers safe on our highways.

TURN AROUND — DON’T DROWN!

Flooding and flash flooding combined is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S. As spring showers arrive in Grayson County, it is important to know what to do if you’re caught in a flash flood or flooded roadway.

Here are some quick tips on how to stay safe in flood conditions:

• Never drive on flooded roads, given that the depth, current, and condition of the road are all unknowns and can be deadly — “turn around, don’t drown.”
• If you come to a flooded area while driving, stop and take an alternate route.
• If your vehicle stalls on a flooded road and water is rising, get out of car, call 911, and move to higher ground.
• Always stay away from floodwaters; even six inches of swiftly moving water can knock someone off their feet. Approximately two feet of swift water can move or float most vehicles, including SUVs and pickup trucks.
• Be especially cautious during periods of limited visibility or nighttime when it is extremely difficult to see and judge conditions — state law requires headlights when wipers are on.

(Continued on page 3)
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I want to take this opportunity to thank the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute for its annual Scholarship Program that provides scholarships for 2014-2015 to Virginia’s youth.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1, 2015!

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. With the help of loyal members like you, we’ve awarded 110 scholarships for 2014-2015 to Virginia’s youth.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from our website or picked up in your local sheriff’s office. In addition to the application, students must submit SAT scores, transcripts, and an essay. A full list of application materials can be found at http://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/. Applications are due May 1, 2015.
On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs’ Institute, I hope you and your family are eager to welcome the return of spring to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Of course many Virginia residents and their families will be taking to the roadways, enjoying the change of season, and exploring all of the wonderful family-oriented events, parks, and scenery Virginia has to offer. So I encourage drivers to be extra vigilant, especially as this time of year brings many out-of-state visitors to our area.

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Virginia General Assembly Tackles Issue of Sexual Assaults on Campuses

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