



NEWSLETTER

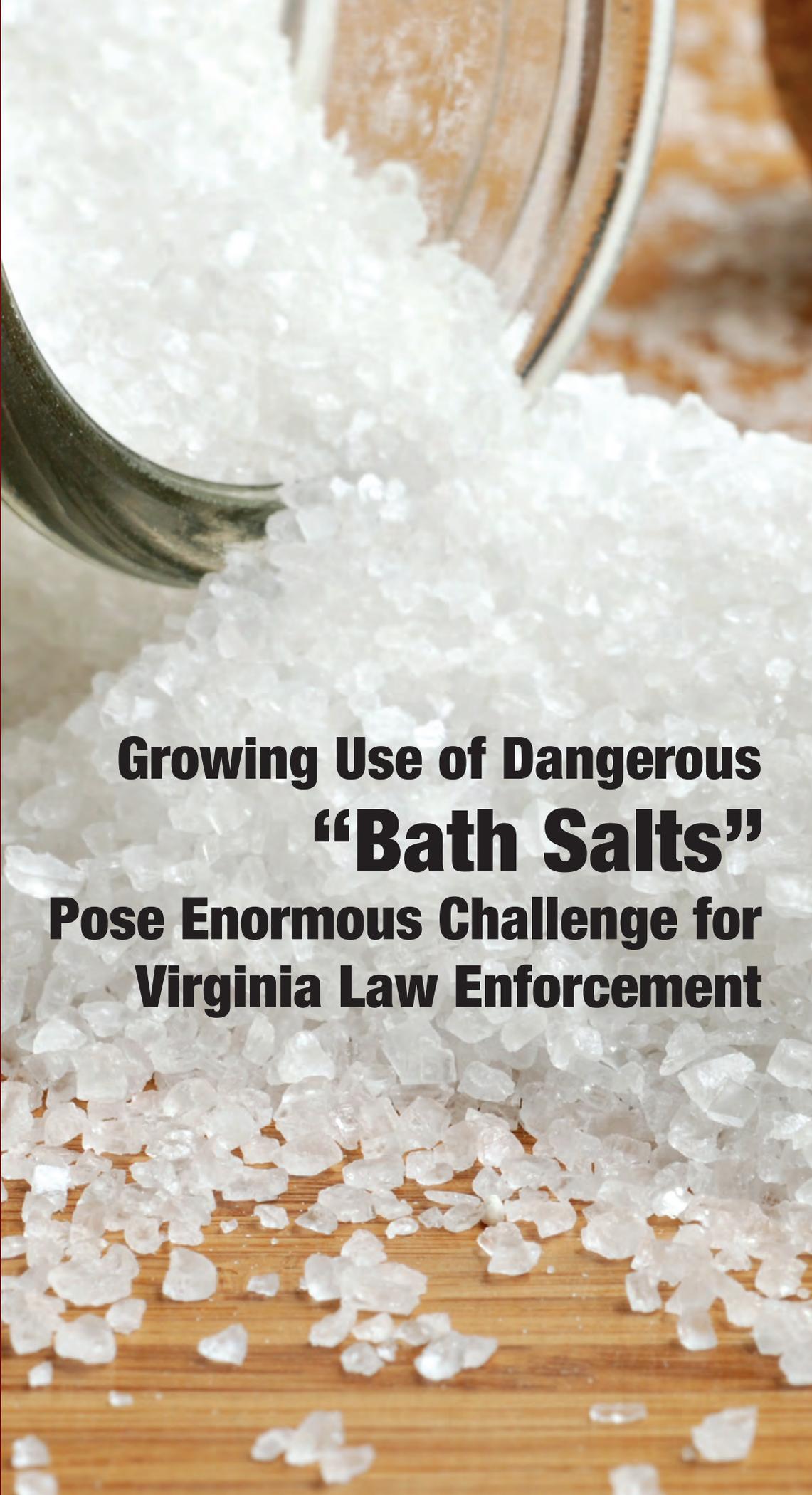
FALL EDITION 2012



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Growing Use of Dangerous "Bath Salts" Pose Enormous Challenge for Virginia Law Enforcement



2012-2013

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DANGEROUS ABUSE OF SYNTHETIC DRUGS – “BATH SALTS” – ON THE RISE IN VIRGINIA

A new synthetic drug that emerged in the U.S. a few years ago is growing in popularity among illegal drug users in Virginia and all across the country and has been linked to several bizarre acts of violence, including murder.

These drugs pose a growing public safety concern as they create a condition some officials call “excited delirium” that makes users paranoid, violent and unpredictable. The drugs have been commonly available in convenience stores and adult book stores.

President Barack Obama signed a bill into law in July that bans the sale, production and possession of more than two dozen of the most common bath salt drugs. But health professionals and law enforcement officers say

lawmakers cannot keep pace with bath salt producers, who constantly come up with new derivatives that aren’t covered by new laws.

Experts who have studied the problem estimate there are more than 100 different bath salt chemicals in circulation. And so without a law or official test, deputies say the same users keep turning up on the same streets eluding any effort to arrest them or to get them treatment.

Governor McDonnell signed legislation that would help strengthen existing laws against bath salts by adding newly identified chemical combinations and a more generic chemical description to allow law enforcement officials to better combat the distribution of these drugs.

FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MEMORIAL IN VIRGINIA

Governor McDonnell recently signed a new bill into law that allows local law enforcement agencies to direct cash funds and proceeds from forfeited drug assets to the Virginia Public Safety Foundation to support the construction of the Commonwealth Public Safety Memorial. Funds seized between July 1, 2012 and July 1, 2014 can be allocated to the Memorial. Funding decisions shall be made following an internal analysis that determines contributions will not negatively impact law-enforcement training or operations.

The Memorial will be constructed in Darden Garden on Capitol Square in Richmond. The names of all public safety personnel who gave the ultimate sacrifice will be adjacent to those who shaped the history of our Commonwealth.

HB348, passed during this year’s Virginia General Assembly, further clarified Virginia’s criminal asset forfeiture laws. According to Delegate Jackson Miller, “This legislation removes confusion for Virginia’s law enforcement officials, Commonwealth’s attorneys, judges, defense attorneys, and citizens and ensures that criminal activity does not pay for its perpetrators. Furthermore, additional legislation patroned by my colleagues Delegate Peter Farrell and Senators Chuck Colgan and Mark Obenshain will allocate the funds seized under these clarified asset forfeiture laws to use these monies to support a monument honoring the brave men and women who died ensuring safety and security in those same communities.”

ELECTION DAY IS ALMOST HERE — KNOW WHERE THE CANDIDATES STAND ON THE ISSUES!

On November 6, 2012, thousands of Virginians will go to the polls and cast their vote for the next President of the United States, as well as their next U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators. This is an important decision that could have a sweeping impact on the future of law enforcement efforts in Virginia and all across the country. And it's vital that our elected officials, from the President on down, understand the needs of law enforcement and the importance of allocating critical funds to promote public safety.

VSI is leading this vital effort to raise public awareness

about the upcoming elections so Bedford County citizens like you learn more about the candidates and get out and cast your vote on November 6th — either through absentee ballot or at the polls!

This is an important decision. So study the candidates' websites and contact them. Ask inquiring 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 www.voterinfo.sbe.virginia.gov/publicsite/.

VSI MEMBERS SPEAK OUT ABOUT PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

We recently asked you and thousands of other VSI supporters across the Commonwealth to participate in our Impact Survey and to give us your opinions on such critical issues as public safety, crime prevention, and other law enforcement-related issues in Virginia. And here's what you had to say ...

1. Do you believe that Virginia lawmakers should increase funding for law enforcement in your county?

YES: 88% - NO: 2% - NO OPINION: 10%

2. In your opinion, will a Virginia law that prohibits drivers under the age of 18 from using cell phones or text messaging make you and your family safer on Bedford County roadways?

***YES: 91%** - NO: 8% - NO OPINION: 1%

*In fact, many respondents noted that this law should pertain to all drivers, not just those under the age of 18.

3. Are you concerned about the safety threat posed by distracted drivers on Bedford County roadways?

YES: 93% - NO: 4% - NO OPINION: 3%

4. Do you support the recent repeal of a 20-year law that restricted handgun buyers to one pistol a month?

YES: 43% - NO: 38% - NO OPINION: 19%

5. Should colleges and universities in xxLocality Namexxxx and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia retain the power to ban guns on campus?

YES: 78% - NO: 18% - NO OPINION: 4%

Your feedback will play an important role in helping the Bedford County Sheriff's office improve public safety efforts in your community.

THE MOST DANGEROUS THING TO DO WHILE DRIVING: TEXTING

According to a recent study conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute:

- Texting while driving increases the risk of accident **23.2 times** over unimpaired driving.
- Texting while driving results in longer response times than even drunken driving.
- In the moments before a crash or near crash, drivers typically spend nearly five seconds looking at their mobile devices—enough time at typical highway speeds to cover more area than the length of a football field.
- Though 95 percent of drivers surveyed said texting behind the wheel was unacceptable and unsafe, at least 21 percent admit to doing it anyway.
- Texting behind the wheel is generational: 37 percent of drivers 18 to 27 admit to texting while driving, compared to 14 percent of 28 to 44 year olds, and 2 percent of 45 to 60 year olds.
- An accident can happen in two to three seconds while texting.

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF MICHAEL J. BROWN



On behalf of all of us at the Bedford County Sheriff's office, I hope you and your family are excited to leave the sweltering heat of this summer behind and enjoy a cooler more comfortable fall in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I want you to know public safety is our number one priority at my Sheriff's office. That's why I'm grateful for the continued feedback of Bedford County residents like you on issues that could personally impact your ability to keep you and your family safe.

As I mentioned in this newsletter, texting while driving poses an enormous threat to public safety—in fact, in study after study it has been deemed more dangerous than drunk driving. And so I encourage you to speak with your children and grandchildren about the dangers of texting while driving, which is illegal and subject to fines in our state.

As always, it is my privilege to serve as your Sheriff and I urge you to contact my office if you have any concerns about crime prevention efforts in our community. Make no mistake, my fellow law enforcement officers and I will continue to strive to do everything in our power to serve and protect the residents of Bedford County.

And please, I hope you'll continue to be an important partner in our efforts to keep our community of Bedford County secure by reporting crimes and suspicious activity when you see them so that we can do our very best to keep this community a safe place to work, play, live, and raise our families.

I deeply appreciate your continued support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M.J. Brown".

Sheriff Michael J. Brown
Bedford County
1345 Falling Creek Rd
Bedford, VA 24523
540-586-4800

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

One of the many benefits the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute offers to Bedford 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 college or university. In fact, with the help of loyal members like you, we've awarded 64 scholarships for 2011-2012 to Virginia's youth.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from our website or picked up in your local Sheriff's office after January 31, 2013. 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/scholarship-application/>. Applications are due May 1, 2013.



Don't forget to Join Us on Facebook! — Where we'll keep you updated on breaking news, including legislation that could impact law enforcement efforts in Virginia. And feel free to post your feedback on ways we can improve our programs that benefit Virginia Sheriffs, Deputies, and citizens like you.

We Want to Hear from You ...

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



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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.

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