

PORTSMOUTH CITY JAIL

The Portsmouth City Jail was inspected by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Corrections for compliance of the standards set forth by that agency.

In the State of Virginia the Department of Corrections performs yearly unannounced Life, Health, and Safety inspections. These audits check for 35 standards that have to be implemented and encountered by staff and inmates in the facility's daily operations.

Every three years the Department of Corrections will send a team of auditors to perform an inspection which is extremely thorough and includes 122 standards of compliance. Since the Portsmouth City Jail does not house any juveniles it has to comply only with 118 of these set standards. This includes food services, medical services, physical activities, and programs for inmates, records, personnel, maintenance of the jail, operation, the facility, and many more factors. The audit also includes the Life, Health, and Safety Inspections of the previous three years, which play a role in the overall compliance audit. Any correctional facility, which achieves a score of 100% compliance, will not have to face an unannounced Life, Health, and Safety Inspection in the same year. Those inspections will resume the following year and will become yearly again until the Compliance Inspection after three years.

The Portsmouth City Jail was built in 1969, started operations in 1970, and was designed to hold 198 inmates. The rated capacity of the Department of Corrections for the City Jail is 248 inmates.

The Portsmouth Sheriff's Office is proud to announce that our facility and staff received a score of 100% in the Compliance Audit by the Department of Corrections once again.

We also passed this inspection, with a score of 100% compliance in the last inspection which was 2007. This is quite an accomplishment with a seasoned facility, which requires constant maintenance, has a reduced staff due to State Budget Cuts, and holds a yearly average of 481 inmates.

Our facility has also passed the yearly Fire Inspection with a 100%.

It speaks volumes for the staff and leadership of the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office.



COURT SECURITY

The Court Security Division has a new member, a K-9 with the name Green. He is a three year old black Labrador and is a certified bomb dog. The K-9 was offered to the Sheriff's Office at no cost by Xe Services, LLC. Sheriff Watson jumped at the idea of a fully trained bomb dog to work in our city's court complex. The dog is passive, friendly and is the complete opposite of the other PSO K-9 Tyger. Tyger was specially trained to be a very aggressive dog. His training started when he was only six months old and is a certified narcotics and search dog. The supervisor of Court Security, Captain E. Goumenis is the caretaker/handler of Green and they have become constant companions. The dog has already made of bunch of friends throughout the court facilities, especially in the court clerks offices, where he is welcomed by treats. He was a little on the skinny side and is being pampered by the entire staff in Court Security. Green is a smart dog and Captain Goumenis found out first hand that this dog will let nothing stand in his way. When the Captain picked him up he had left a glass container with peanuts on the back seat of his vehicle. On the way back Capt. Goumenis stopped at a store to pick up some food for the dog and was only gone for 10 minutes. When he got back to his vehicle Green had managed to unscrew the top of the container and helped himself to the peanuts. Goumenis is still puzzled by the fact that the dog was able to open the jar, but he said, Green looked like he had a smile on his face.



SHERIFF WATSON

On March 22, Sheriff Watson had to undergo surgery at Norfolk Sentara Hospital for prostate cancer and was release from the Hospital the following day. He is recuperating at home and is expected to be released by his doctor in mid April to return to duty. The Sheriff is recuperating well and is taking it easy as instructed. His physician informed him that the cancer was contained and was apparently totally removed during surgery, implying that no further treatment will be necessary.

Sheriff Watson has turned over all operations to Col. John Gomoke during his recovery, complying with the Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

He has received a lot of well wishes and would like to thank everyone for their concern and prayers.

If you need assistance or have any questions, you can reach Col. J. Gomoke at 393-5619.

DEPUTY OF THE QUARTER



Deputy Robert Massey has been with the Sheriff's Office since 2005 and is assigned to Corrections. He was nominated by his watch commander Lt. W. Sugg to be considered as Employee of the Quarter. It was an easy choice for the chain of command in Corrections and the Sheriff. During a recent staff meeting Sheriff Watson presented Deputy Massey with a Certificate of Appreciation and a gift card.

Dep. Massey was recognized for his teamwork, knowledge of the job, professional appearance, his courtesy toward his fellow co-workers and inmates alike, and his willingness to lend a helping hand to anyone. Lt. Sugg wrote that he admires and respects the work ethics of Dep. Massey and that it was a pleasure to be around him because of his intellect and his comical personality, which is welcomed by all who work and come in contact with Massey. The Sheriff's Office is proud to have such dedicated employees

Congratulations to Deputy Robert C. Massey, Jr. !

LENDING A HAND

Sheriff Watson received a call from a lady who was brutally assaulted by a man after he broke into her house. She had reported the attack to the Police Department and because of their diligent investigation, they have apprehended the suspect since then. Following the attack the man threatened her saying, if she would call the police, he would come back to kill her. Rightfully the lady was frightened to death and called the Sheriff to see what the Sheriff's Office could do to help to make her home more secure. The Deputy advised her on what could be done to possibly prevent future crimes simply by making it more visible from the streets. The Sheriff sent a work crew out to her house to work on the landscape. They raised the canopy on the trees and cut some bushes down around her home, providing a clear view of the house, the yard, and also eliminated possible hiding spots. This made it easier for the police or a bystander to see the home and will discourage burglars. She was also approached by a representative of Broadview Security, Kirsten Rife, who offered a free security system installation. The very next day, Broadview Security had a technician install a system. Needless to say, the lady will sleep better at nights, knowing she has an alarm system and no more spots around the house for anyone to hide.



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PORTSMOUTH PRETTY IN WHITE



We had a lot of snow in the past couple of months and felt the effects from the first snow storm for a few days. It sure was pretty to look at and so peaceful. Specially for the staff, me included, who were able to stay home and enjoy the snow by looking out of the window, with a big fire burning in the fireplace. I can't remember having this much snow in the winter since I moved to Virginia. However, we couldn't complain in comparison to Northern Virginia, or some neighboring States, we were spared.

Most of the personnel of the Sheriff's Office worked and just like so many other folks, had to drive in this mess. Sheriff Watson was able to use the snow blower for the first time since the agency purchased it. The Deputies of the Work Center came out into the snow and ice with their work crews. They cleared the snow around the court complex, in front of some downtown businesses, and churches. The crews were also able to shovel snow off walkways in front of the homes of seniors, who are on our Elderly Watch list.

The Elderly Watch is a wonderful service the Sheriff's Office provides and deputies were able to help a member of this program, when she called to let us know that her heating system had stopped working the day of the snow storm. She noticed it around 4:00 a.m. and made a call to a heating contractor. After leaving several messages and not receiving a return phone call, she finally thought of Dep. Compton. He and Dep. Delaney went over to see if they could repair or get the system working. Unfortunately, they couldn't get the heat to work and offered the lady a ride to a friends or neighbors home. She declined and a neighbor offered her the use of a portable heater. Dep. Compton continued to check on her welfare and later that day was told that a friend of Auxiliary Deputy Pope was able to repair the heating system. It is great to be part of a team and to find or have access to valuable resources like that.

For more information on the Elderly Watch Program, please contact Maj. D. Clemons at 686-2565.



CHALLENGE COINS

On popular demand by the staff of the Sheriff's Office, our Undersheriff Col. Gomoke ordered and bought some challenge coins for the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office. No departmental funds were used in the purchase of those coins. The Colonel has a few remaining coins and would like to make them available to the public. The challenge coins are \$5 each. If you are interested in obtaining one of the coins, please contact Col. John Gomoke at 681-4611. The coins bare the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office Patch on one side and the Sheriff's badge on the other.



DOUGLASS PARK

The neighborhood of Douglass Park was established in 1942 and developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. The community was designed widely for the African American community and the majority worked in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. When Douglass Park came to life with families moving into their new homes, it was located in Norfolk County. In 1963 Norfolk County annexed with Portsmouth and became part of our great City. Douglass Park was named after Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass was born into slavery 1818 on the Lloyds Plantation which was located at the Maryland Eastern Shore. He worked in the fields and on ships until he escaped at the age of 20. Frederick Douglass became one of the foremost leaders of the abolitionist movement, which fought to end slavery within the United States in the decades prior to the Civil War.

He was known as a brilliant speaker, Douglass was asked by the American Anti-Slavery Society to engage in a tour of lectures, and so became recognized as one of America's first great black speakers. He won world fame when his autobiography was publicized in 1845. Two years later he began publishing an antislavery paper called the North Star.

Douglass served as an adviser to President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War and fought for the adoption of constitutional amendments that guaranteed voting rights and other civil liberties for blacks. Douglass provided a powerful voice for human rights during this period of American history and is still revered today for his contributions against racial injustice.

Douglass Park used to have a sign on Grand Street and Portsmouth Boulevard which didn't survive all the years of wear and tear. The civic league combined with some residents of Douglass Park asked the City for a new sign and I don't know what the City's response was, but I can tell you



that Sheriff Watson looked into the cost for a new sign. The Sheriff was going to have one made and donate it, when some inmates in the Work Center heard about the sign for this community. They approached Sheriff Watson and asked if they could pay and donate a sign. These inmates used their funds to purchase the materials for the sign and then erected in the place of the old Douglass park sign. The Sheriff promised them that he would let the residents of the neighborhood know that it was the inmates of the PSO Work Center who donated the sign, because they wanted to give something back to the community.



HUNTERS POINT

The Hunters Point community had a little problem with their sign too and the work crews can through for them also. Sheriff Watson went out there to look at the sign after he received a call that a vehicle had struck the sign. One of the brick pillars was damaged and broken in half. The work crew with help and advice from the Sheriff made the repairs to the pillar. The also painted the top of the brick sign and now you can hardly tell that it was damaged before.



RAINY SEASON



The Sheriff's work crews are still making their way around town digging out ditches in some flooded areas, trying to help some of the people who contact us for help. In some areas we even laid pipe on the owners request after they purchased it. Just give us a call if you need help and we will be happy to assist you. We do have to follow State Code and other guidelines,

when it comes to inmate labor. However, if you or your issue fits in the criteria, we will come through for you.



INVITATION FOR THE SHERIFF



A young man by the name of Jordan called the Sheriff a few weeks ago. Jordan said he had a project in school and was hoping the Sheriff would help him. He wanted the Sheriff to visit his class and explain what a Sheriff is and what duties he has. With this said Sheriff Watson became Jordan's show and tell. Our Sheriff stood before the class and explained the history, duties, and the difference between a deputy and a police officer. He also attempted to clarify the difference of an appointed office and an constitutional office.

The children had an abundance of questions and I know Jordan was proud to have the Sheriff come to his school.

BOY SCOUTS IN JAIL

The Boy Scouts invaded the Portsmouth Sheriff's Office Intake and Receiving area. Well that is not entirely correct. One of the Boy Scout Troop Leaders contacted our Undersheriff Col. Gomoke and asked if they could tour the Jail. Well, we do not allow tours in our Jail, but we will take people upon request and if the time is right for an inside look through our Intake and Receiving area. Lt. Carol Handy was the tour guide and was absolutely wonderful with the young visitors. She answered all questions of the children and their dads alike. It seemed that the parents were just as interested as their little ones. We showed them a food tray which was the dinner that evening for the inmates in our Jail. They were astounded that there was no dessert or junk food. I had to laugh at a young boys remark on fingerprints and I am positive, he saw the television show CSI at least once. It was educational for the young and not so young alike. All said, they enjoyed the tour, but would not enjoy spending the night.



We are on the web!

www.portsmouthva.gov/psa

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MARCH OF DIMES

The Sheriff's Office participates in annual fundraisers for various organizations. This month we started our campaign to benefit the March of Dimes. On April 11th a handful of volunteers from the Sheriff's Office will be outside of the Wal-Mart Store on Frederick Boulevard to ask for donations. We will have prizes that we will hand out, or deliver in the afternoon. You can enter the drawing by donating \$1 or any amount you wish to give and write your name and phone number on the back of the donation card. The prizes are compliments from the March of Dimes and have the name and colors of the organization printed on each individual item. Please come out and see us!

BUILDING RAMPS FOR THE DISABLED

The Sheriff's Office has built ramps before and is still hoping to help individuals who are in need and can buy the materials, but cannot afford the labor. We have partnered up with Ramps Across America through our membership with the Portsmouth Task Force on Aging and are waiting to hear from them in reference to upcoming projects. One of our Auxiliary Deputies is a certified building instructor and is registered with the Tidewater Builders Association. He works full time as an instructor and volunteers some of his evenings and weekends with the Sheriff's Office. You can contact the Sheriff's Office 393-5280/393-5461 or either organization on the web or by phone. Ramps Across America contact number is 757-327-0696 and their website is www.rampsacrossamerica.com. The contact person for the Portsmouth Task Force on Aging is the president Margie Connor. Her number is 757-636-1010, or use their website www.portsmouthtaskforceonaging.community.officelive.com.



IN SCHOOL AGAIN!



Sheriff Watson along with some Deputies, joined Portsmouth Firefighters and Police Officers recently by volunteering some of their time reading to children at Olive Branch Elementary School. It was fun and the children seemed to enjoy all the people in uniform reading Dr. Seuss's books to them. The kids had a lot of questions for everybody and the volunteers had a welcome break from their daily routines. The Sheriff read the Cat in the Hat and tried to keep up with the story, by showing the pictures to the crowd around him.