



Prince George's County, Maryland Office of the Sheriff News

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1696

A MESSAGE FROM THE SHERIFF

21st Century Policing: Looking to the Future

I always enjoy seeing members of our agency, both sworn and civilian, recognized during the Public Safety Valor Awards and at our own Sheriff's Agency Awards because I know their recognition also stands as an example of service, excellence, and fidelity to the mission of our agency. For law enforcement, service, professionalism and excellence must be the values we uphold as we consider – in light of unfavorable events around the nation - questions and concerns from the

community about modern policing.

Two things we know are true: Policing is a vital function to the well-being of our community and the national concerns mentioned above have brought us to a moment in time when we and the community have no choice but to get it right.



Today, there is the sense within communities that in our vital role we are off track and off kilter; that we

are militaristic and not well-trained in our

CONTINUED: See SHERIFF, Page 2

SHERIFF IMPERSONATOR PHONE SCAM

The Office of the Sheriff continues to hear from victims of scams by impostors claiming to be from the Sheriff's Office. The scammers threaten victims with arrest, scaring the victim into giving them money. The scammers have used different angles to seem legitimate. The most recent twist is that they tell the victim to mail their receipt of payment to the Sheriff's Office as proof of payment.

Here's how the scams work. The callers pose as the Sheriff, claiming that the citizen has missed jury duty or has an outstanding warrant for their arrest. They instruct the victim that they can pay a fine in order to avoid being

prosecuted. The calls appear to be coming from a local number even when they actually may be coming from out of state or even from out of the country.

At Sheriff High's request, the media have assisted us by letting the public know many times that no sworn or civilian member of the Sheriff's Office calls citizens about jury duty, nor do we ask citizens for money on a pre-paid card for missing jury duty or for any other reason. The

Sheriff's Office advises anyone who receives a call to hang up, contact the Prince Georges County Police at 301-772-4420 and file an incident report.



Melvin C. High
Sheriff



Colonel Darrin C. Palmer
Chief Assistant Sheriff

**Prince George's County
Office of the Sheriff**

5303 Chrysler Way
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

(301) 780-8600

sheriffinfo@co.pg.md.us

www.princegeorgescountymd.gov

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INSPECTOR GENERAL,
Continued from Page 2

If owners suspect that squatters are living in a property they should contact the local police agency and request that the squatters be told to leave.

In addition, a landowner may file a Complaint for Ejectment of a tenant wrongfully holding over after a judgment for eviction (Real Property Art. 8-402) or against a squatter illegally occupying a residence. This action would be filed in the District Court, requesting that the court issue a Warrant of Restitution directing that local law enforcement be granted the authority to use 'all necessary and proper force' to carry out the court's order.

Eviction is the process by which the Sheriff turns a tenant out of possession of a leased premise after the District Court has issued a Warrant of Restitution directing the Sheriff to place the owner back into possession of the property.

When a complaint for default on a mortgage results in a judgment of foreclosure the Circuit Court directs

the Sheriff to evict the former owner pursuant to a Writ of Possession.

There have been a growing number of scams involving con artists who take advantage of renters by falsely representing themselves as homeowners or real estate brokers for



properties that are vacant but that they neither own nor legally represent. The scam involves the fake owner or agent negotiating a written lease for a vacant property but pocketing the rent payments.

In order to avoid this scam, it is strongly recommended that a prospective renter request the owner or broker to produce a copy of the Rental License required by Prince George's County for all rental properties.

Lastly, the mortgage and foreclosure crisis has created situations where legitimate tenants face potential eviction because of a foreclosure action against a property owner who has defaulted or failed to pay their mortgage obligation. In this case the tenant with a bona fide and "arms-length" written lease agreement is protected from summary eviction pursuant to the Protection of Tenants at Foreclosure Act, Real Property Article, Section 7-105.6 (c). Once the tenant learns of the pending eviction, they are required to notify the new property owner in writing that they are a current tenant and that they are exercising their right to remain at the residence until the end of their lease.

Always remember the old rule of caveat emptor or buyer beware. If the lease deal that is being offered seems too easy or is too good to be true then it probably is not a legal lease situation and the prospective tenant should be on guard to ask more questions about the owner and the property.

*Inspector General
Mark Spencer*



**Child Support Enforcement
Why Taxpayer "Return on Investment" Matters**



The Sheriff's Child Support Enforcement Unit, together with the State Office on Child Support Enforcement facilitated the collection of nearly \$119 million dollars in FY 2014. The state invested \$2.4 million of taxpayer's dollars to fund the team of 5 civilians, 12 deputies and 3 supervisors that is led by Lieutenant Ronald Blackwell. That's a 5,000% return on investment. Although most taxpayers don't think in terms of return on investment for taxpayer dollars spent, that's no drop in the bucket. In addition to child support collections, each year Child Support serves thousands of summonses and warrants related to child support or establishing paternity.

The Child Support Enforcement Unit's annual Mother's Day Sweep is one of the ways the unit continues to deliver results. The sweep took place on May 20-21st and was an outstanding operational success. The goal of the operation was to attempt to serve 130 mostly

delinquent child support warrants. With teams of four to six deputies, 45 arrests were made to close 49 warrants. The child support payment arrests represented delinquent payments of over \$564,000.

"The planning and execution is critical to the success of these operations," said Captain Sharon Saunders, Assistant Chief, Bureau of Field Operations for Child Support Enforcement, Civil and Landlord & Tenant Division. "We're very proud of the work our teams did but what's most important to us and to our state partner is that these delinquencies affect children. Our operations make it possible for parents to get back on track with each other and the court for the care and well-being of children who deserve to be taken care of by both parents."

The partnership between the State Office of Child Support and the Sheriff's Child Support Enforcement Unit may be one of the most successful in the state.

**Sheriff Melvin C. High Scholarship Awards
Celebrating Five Years of Outstanding County Scholars**

Three outstanding Prince George's County 2015 High School graduates-



Ms. Milan Brown

Ms. Milan Brown, Ms. Erika Johnson, and Ms. Sabrina Towson – were awarded the 2015 Sheriff Melvin C. High scholarship at the fifth annual awards reception at the Sheriff's Office Headquarters in May. This year's winners join thirteen other winners who were awarded scholarships which began in the first year of Sheriff High's first term in office.

On their way to beginning new academic careers, the winners are off to college. Milan Brown, a graduate

of Eleanor Roosevelt High School will attend Howard University to major in Chemical Engineering. Erika Johnson who graduated from Oxon Hill High School will attend Alabama State University as a Psychology major. Sabrina Towson, a graduate of Crossland High School will attend the University of Maryland Eastern Shore as a major in Pre-Law & International Business.

Of the scholarships he personally funds and challenging graduates in the spirit of excellence, Sheriff High said, "I came from meager beginnings and the help of others

encouraged me and set expectations for me. I promised to give back and



Ms. Erika Johnson

with these scholarships, I also hope to encourage and set expectations for our scholars – expectations I know they can live up to."

Lt Colonel Regina Taylor, Field Operations Bureau Chief and administrator of the scholarship awards said, "Like all our past recipients, each is highly acclaimed by their high school faculty members and advisors; I think we have to plan to bring all our scholars back for a reunion."



Ms. Sabrina Towson

**AGENCY
AWARD
WINNERS**



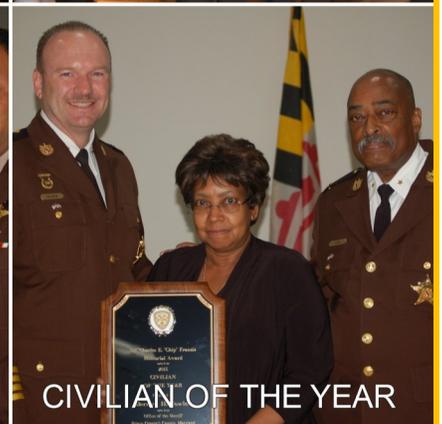
BRONZE VALOR



AWARD WINNERS



DEPUTY OF THE YEAR



CIVILIAN OF THE YEAR