**LOCAL CRIME LINE HISTORY**

The simple fact is that law enforcement personnel cannot be everywhere, all the time, and criminals are adept at taking advantage of this situation. Crime Line is a program that encourages citizens to anonymously come forward with information about criminal activity in their community. If the anonymous tip leads to an arrest (does not have to be a conviction) the tipster is eligible for a cash reward of up to $1,500. In the state of Virginia, the State Code guarantees that the person providing an anonymous tip through the Crime Line (1-888-LOCK-U-UP), or the P3 app, does not have to appear in court as a witness and their identity will not be released to the public.

The current Virginia Peninsula Crime Stoppers, Inc. (VPCS), is part of an international crime fighting network that had its roots in a Crime Stoppers program started in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976. An investigator in Albuquerque was trying to solve a crime related to the murder of a gas station attendant. A simple tip from a member of the public helped solve the crime and now there are Crime Line related programs in over 30 countries worldwide and programs throughout the United States.

Locally, a group of businessmen, who were in an organization called the "Peninsula Retail Merchants Association", met in early 1982 with Chief Minetti and Chief Austin to discuss how a crime line program would work locally. As a result of these meetings with the Chiefs the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Retail Merchants Association met on April 21, 1982 and declared the existence of the Peninsula Crime Line.

The VPCS (formerly called the Peninsula Crime Line) is a partnership between law enforcement, private citizens, and the media. The system involves a monetary reward, up to $1,500.00, for anonymous tips over a secure line. Law enforcement agencies supported by VPCS include the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg and the counties of Gloucester, James City, and York. Over the past 10 years alone this program has received over 14,000 calls leading to 925 arrests, helping law enforcement solve 763 cases. Over the same period the calls enabled law enforcement to recover almost $3,000,000 in value of stolen property and illegal drugs, and anonymous tipsters were approved for over $226,000 in rewards. Reward funds are the result of generous donations from corporations, local businesses and the public. It is important to note that VPCS receives no funding from federal state or local governments and relies entirely on donations and grants to fund the program.

VPCS' primary method of receiving crime tips has historically been the use of the Crime Line phone number 1-888-LOCK-U-UP. Over the past few years VPSC has introduced other social media methods, particularly texting, in its fight against crime. Tipsters are not required to leave their name or telephone number and callers are given confidential numbers which are used by the tipster to track the progress of their report and to collect their cash reward.

Regional television stations, the newspaper and Adams Outdoor Advertising with electrical highway signs are a significant aid to apprehending wanted individuals.

VPCS is headquartered in Newport News City Center and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. The Board of Directors is made up of volunteers who meet once a month to review law enforcement recommendations for tips received the previous month. The VPCS Speakers Bureau is available to provide additional details concerning the organization mission and its anonymous tip reward program. Information is also available on the VPCS web site www.vapeninsulacrimestoppers.com.

Donations to VPCS can be mailed directly to VPCS at P.O. Box 12111, Newport News, VA 23612; through the donations tab on the VPCS Facebook page; or submitted via the VPCS web site (www.vapeninsulacrimestoppers.com).

**MISSION STATEMENT**

To increase the safety of the Virginia Peninsula and area communities by assisting law enforcement agencies in removing undesirable individual from the community.

**PURPOSE**

To motivate citizens to provide information about crimes and wanted persons by offering financial rewards and anonymity as provided by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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President

Virginia Peninsula Crime Stoppers, Inc.