



## **Division of Capitol Police News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Capitol Police earn threat-response grant**

**RICHMOND** -- The Virginia Division of Capitol Police, a leader in threat response and security planning, has been awarded a federal grant that will enable the agency to help first responders throughout the region better prepare for large-scale public events that present potential threats.

The grant, awarded through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, is for \$124,479. The funds were made available through the U.S. Department of Justice's Byrne/Justice Assistance Program.

Capitol Police plan to use the funds for eight days of training as well as two days of exercises dedicated to practicing responses to crisis events. The training is expected to begin in March and be completed by September, and it will be available to area police agencies and other first responders.

This grant is one component of Virginia's effort to better prepare communities to respond to threats of violent extremism and domestic terrorism. Recent disturbances in Charlottesville and other communities highlighted a need for training designed to improve the ability of agencies to manage large public events and respond to large-scale demonstrations and protest marches.

As part of their mission to provide progressive law enforcement, Capitol Police officers routinely respond to large-scale public demonstrations on and around the grounds of the Virginia Capitol, and the agency frequently joins with area police departments and other first responders to design response plans when there are threats to community safety.

"The Richmond region has a great track record for managing large events," said Col. Anthony S. Pike, chief of the Capitol Police. "Our future success in a world of changing hazards requires that we constantly strive to improve our readiness. This grant will allow our public safety partners in the region to train together, to build cooperative relationships and ultimately to work together across agencies and across disciplines toward our shared goal of making this community a safer place for citizens to live and work."

Founded in Jamestown in 1618, the Virginia Capitol Police in 2010 became one of less than 20 percent of the eligible law-enforcement agencies in the state to earn accreditation from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission, a distinguished status the force continues to maintain.

Capitol Police in the coming weeks will release details about the specific course offerings as well as when and where they will be offered. The courses will be targeted toward first-line supervisors as well as command staff.

Those interested in more information about planned course offerings may contact Capt. Steven A. Witmer, senior legal specialist for Virginia Capitol Police, at (804) 786-0413 or [switmer@dcp.virginia.gov](mailto:switmer@dcp.virginia.gov).

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