

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

**REPORT ON THE
IMPACT OF THE AGING POPULATION**



October 2006

**Colonel W. Steven Flaherty
Superintendent**



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Colonel W. S. (Steve) Flaherty

Superintendent

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

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October 1, 2006

TO: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine, Governor of Virginia

Members of the Senate and the House of Delegates

Pursuant to Title 2.2, Chapter 55.1, §2.2-5510, Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, I am respectfully submitting herewith, a *Report on the Impact of the Aging Population*. The report is a compilation of the department's efforts during the past fiscal year.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. S. Flaherty".

Superintendent

WSF/CAV

Enclosure

Report on the Impact of the Aging Population

Preface

Pursuant to Title 2.2, Chapter 55.1, §2.2-5510, Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the Department of State Police is pleased to provide this *Report on the Impact of the Aging Population*.

Executive Summary

Upon request, the Department of State Police currently provides crime prevention, personal safety, and traffic safety courses to our senior citizens. Trained crime prevention specialists are assigned to division and area offices throughout Virginia, providing programs to various community groups. They have brochures and hand-outs formatted for the elderly to reinforce their program message. The Protect and Respect Intergenerational Mentoring Program was officially launched in May of 2003. It was created to strengthen the commonwealth's focus on crime prevention, to reduce elder abuse and victimization, to help eliminate financial fraud and scams targeting seniors, to promote fire safety and teach effective emergency responses, and to provide needed resources to improve the overall quality of life for seniors. Covering more than 30 topics in all, courses are bundled according to regional and local needs to form customized training programs that address the crime prevention needs and safety concerns in each community.

The Department of State Police will continue to provide pertinent programs to senior groups throughout Virginia to ensure that program objectives are met and that those communities requesting assistance are receiving law enforcement support to the degree necessary in identified problem areas.

In FY2006, department personnel provided direct investigative services to 393 crime victims age sixty-five and older. The department also maintains statewide statistics on crimes against the elderly through the Incident-Based Reporting System.

Introduction

Virginia's senior population is growing and living longer, in part due to better health care than earlier generations had. With that growth comes a greater need for programs to address issues of particular concern to seniors, such as crime prevention, personal safety and motor vehicle safety. The department is committed to supporting local law enforcement agencies with the provision of senior programs, as well as initiating programs in areas where local resources are limited. The senior population is more active than their counterparts in previous generations, and they are more likely to belong to organizations that coordinate with law enforcement to provide informative prevention programs in addition to their entertainment and other activities. They are also more likely to use the Internet, travel, and have contact with many other people as part of their daily activities. Their active lifestyle affords more opportunities for them to become victims of fraud, scams, theft and various other crimes. Section 2.2-703, Code of Virginia, defines "older Virginians" or "older persons" as persons aged 60 years or older. Many persons describe "60" as the new "40." These people are usually intelligent, active and productive members of the community. Many retire from their career to start a new business or to provide more time for hobbies, volunteer work and social activities. To best serve the senior population, the focus of law enforcement must be adjusted to the particular group receiving the presentation and the particular hazards to which they are most susceptible.

Traffic Safety and Crime Prevention

Upon request, the Department of State Police currently provides crime prevention, personal safety, and traffic safety courses to our senior residents. Trained crime prevention specialists are assigned to division and area offices throughout Virginia, providing programs to various community groups. They have brochures and hand-outs formatted for the elderly to reinforce their program message. The Protect and Respect Intergenerational Mentoring Program was officially launched in May of 2003. It was created to strengthen the commonwealth's focus on crime prevention, to reduce elder abuse and victimization, to help eliminate financial fraud and scams targeting seniors, to promote fire safety and teach effective emergency responses, and to provide needed resources to improve the overall quality of life for seniors. Covering more than 30 topics in all, courses are bundled according to regional and local needs to form customized training programs that address the crime prevention needs and safety concerns in each community. The programs are conducted throughout the commonwealth, teaching seniors practical skills for improving their safety and reducing their likelihood of becoming victims of crime.

During the period from October 1, 2005, through September 30, 2006, this agency provided seven Protect and Respect talks to 126 people. This is in addition to the various other presentations given to seniors by crime prevention personnel on personal and traffic safety.

The department offers a variety of programs to seniors to enhance traffic safety.

1. A flexibility fitness training package helps improve older driver performance. This program explains the importance of maintaining flexibility in relation to maintaining good driving skills.
2. *We're Here to Get You There Safely* addresses maintaining a vehicle, preparing an emergency kit for minor vehicle repairs, planning the route ahead of time, having a map on hand, and diligently using safety belts.
3. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) driver safety program helps seniors self-assess their driving ability.
4. The *Safe Driving for Older Adults Program* assists seniors in conducting a physical self-assessment and determining if they need to adjust their driving habits.
5. *DriveWell*, an extensive program developed by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and the American Society on Aging, promotes older driver safety and mobility in the community.

In addition to traffic safety programs, the department offers seniors an assortment of personal safety and crime prevention programs.

1. *Protect and Respect* presentations cover the topics of fraud, scams, identity theft, elder abuse, personal safety, home security and other topics of relevance to seniors.
2. *Common Sense Crime Prevention for Senior Citizens* suggests ways to prevent becoming a victim, such as having income deposited directly into an account, joining the neighborhood watch, avoiding going out alone, locking doors and windows, and keeping the home and yard well illuminated.
3. *Avoid Scams and Fraud* addresses telephone scams, sweepstakes and other mail scams, and not opening the door for strangers.
4. The *Stepping Out – Mature Adults: Be Healthy, Walk Safely Program* provides guidance on maintaining physical independence by walking and safety tips for successfully maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
5. *Un futuro más seguro para las personas mayores* is a crime prevention program that targets the Hispanic senior population.

Many of the handouts provided to participants in these traffic and safety programs have been created in large print, so that they can be easily read by senior citizens.

Law Enforcement Services

The Department of State Police is committed to training personnel to deal effectively with elderly and disabled persons. Basic trooper training includes a two-hour class on

child and elder abuse, a one-hour class on dealing with Alzheimers patients, and a one-hour class on dealing with the deaf and hard of hearing.

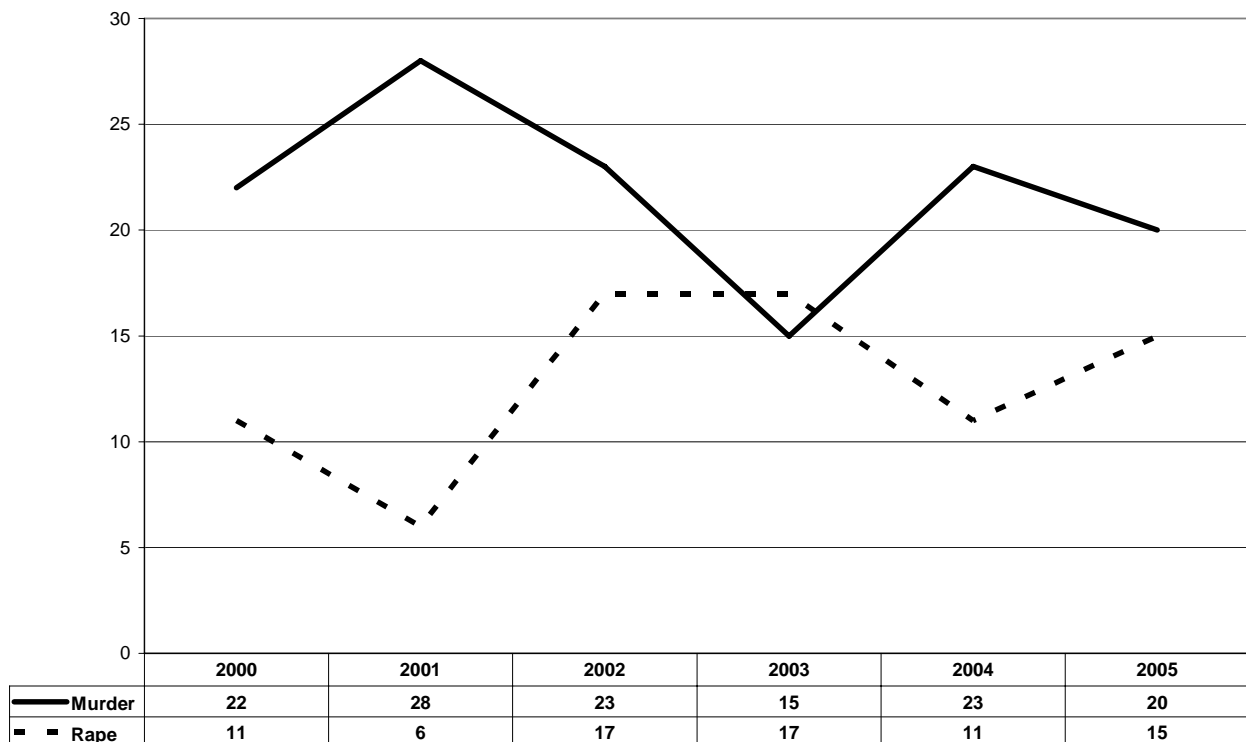
Sworn employees are trained to be observant as they interact with all drivers, including seniors, to identify drivers whose ability to safely operate a motor vehicle is compromised by disability or illness. Medical Review Request forms are submitted to the Department of Motor Vehicles as appropriate.

Department personnel investigate a number of crimes in which seniors are victimized. Information on these crimes and victims is captured by the department's Field Activity Computerized Tracking System (FACTS). According to FACTS data, the number of seniors by age group who received direct investigative services from department personnel is as follows:

AGE	FY 2006	FY 2005	Percent change
65-74	205	221	- 7%
75-84	153	116	+ 32%
85 +	35	46	- 24%

The department also maintains the Incident-Based Reporting System, which collects crime statistics from all law enforcement agencies in the state. The following graph illustrates statewide crime trends for murders and rapes in which seniors were victims:

Murder and Rape Victims - 65 and Older



Conclusion

The Virginia Department of State Police is acutely aware of the increasing need for specialized programs for senior residents, as well as the need for additional training for sworn personnel to enhance their skills in working with an older population. This is being addressed both in training personnel and providing programs to seniors to teach them traffic safety and crime prevention strategies.

The Department of State Police will continue to monitor all operations to ensure that program objectives are met and that those senior groups requesting assistance are receiving law enforcement support. This will provide senior citizens with a higher degree of confidence that they are safe in their neighborhoods and on the highways and are less likely to become targets for criminal activity.