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For Immediate Release

Outstanding Fraud Fighters Receive Awards in Virginia

RICHMOND, Va. – The Virginia State Police (VSP) Insurance Fraud Program (IFP) recognized twelve Virginia “Fraud Fighters” during the recent Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Special Investigation Units (VA IASIU) Annual Fraud Seminar held in Richmond. The Fraud Fighters Award, established in 2005 by the IFP, recognizes those individuals who demonstrate their willingness to go the extra mile fighting fraud in the commonwealth.

Nominees represented the categories of law enforcement, commonwealth’s attorneys and the insurance industry. The awards were based on the nominees’ contributions to Virginia’s anti-insurance fraud efforts, which include their involvement and contribution to investigations; prevention and pro-active activities; enforcement; interaction with the insurance community; and financial impact by recoveries and restitution resulting from their fraud-fighting efforts.

The recipients of the 2011 Fraud Fighters Award are:

- Virginia Beach Communications Operator **Azia Brown** and Virginia Beach Officer **Nicholas A. Ball** for their role in exposing a staged accident after having received a “pocket dialed” 911 call where the perpetrators unknowingly revealed their fraudulent plans. The fraudsters were arrested on a total of 16 felonies, including Obtaining and Attempting to Obtain Money by False Pretense, Conspiracy and Felony Child Endangerment.



VA Beach Captain Theresa Orso, VA Beach Officer Ball, and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.



Lt. Kevin Wolfe, Asst. Commonwealth's Attorney Dickie Cox and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.

- Lieutenant **Kevin R. Wolfe**, Powhatan County Sheriff's Office, and Powhatan County's Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney **Richard "Dickie" K. Cox** were instrumental in bringing a known criminal to justice when Lt. Wolfe uncovered what he thought was insurance fraud prior to the fraudster actually making the claim. This case was proven on the forensic document examinations; and the diligence of Cox in developing the charges lead to the conviction of this criminal on eight felonies and two misdemeanors.

- **Jerry Dexter**, lead investigator for GEICO Insurance, and James City County Assistant Fire Marshall **Michelle Toutaint**, conducted their independent investigations when a vehicle that was reported to be stolen showed up torched in a remote part of James City County about an hour later. Their independent investigations lead to the same conclusion. The fraudster, an enlisted sailor in the Navy, pleaded guilty to one felony count of Arson; had to make restitution of \$1,200; and received a dishonorable discharge from the Navy.



GEICO Investigator Jerry Dexter, Assistant Fire Marshall Michelle Toutaint, and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.



VFB Vice President of Investigations Frank Dunton, VSP Special Agent Matthew Dyke, and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.

- **Frank Dunton**, vice president of investigations Virginia Farm Bureau, and Virginia State Police Special Agent **Matthew Dyke**, investigated the same Nottoway County arson, which had extensive fire and smoke damage throughout the entire home. Working independently, both arson investigators determined the fire was intentionally set and both provided testimony as expert witnesses. The suspect was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years for the arson and 10 years for breaking and entering. The fraudster was also ordered to pay restitution to Virginia Farm Bureau in the amount of \$127,000.

- Virginia State Police Special Agent **Joshua Fannon** and Virginia Farm Bureau Investigator Supervisor **Bob Miner** investigated what initially appeared to be an accidental fire. The investigation revealed the fire had been deliberately set and was not the result of a dog knocking over a candle. The damages and insurance claim totaled more than \$125,000. **Wayne L. Farmer**, commonwealth's attorney for Isle of Wight County, did his own investigation, which revealed that scenario was part of the *Young and the Restless* television soap opera that aired earlier. The perpetrator eventually pleaded guilty, and her claim was also denied.



Commonwealth's Attorney Wayne Farmer, VSP Special Agent Joshua Fannon, VFB Investigator Supervisor Bob Miner, and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.



State Farm Insurance Supervisor Lisa Elmore, State Farm Investigator Gary Feazelle, and VSP Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Lt. Colonel H.C. Davis.

- **Gary Feazelle**, an investigator with State Farm Insurance, wasn't nominated for just one case, but for all the work he does for both his employer and the Special Investigation Unit community as a whole. Not only is he a top-notch investigator, but Feazelle is proactive with informing and raising community awareness about insurance fraud. He's received numerous awards for his investigative work and industry relations; and Feazelle's involvement and contribution in multiple complex investigations have led to successful identification of fraudulent activity and successful outcomes.

The Insurance Fraud Program of the Virginia State Police was established January 1, 1999, through legislation approved by the General Assembly. The program's mission is to address the growing crime of insurance fraud in Virginia by conducting thorough professional insurance fraud investigations; by providing insurance fraud training for law enforcement personnel; and by increasing citizen awareness and cooperation through educational and rewards programs.

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