

Spring 2005

FRAUD FACTS



Newsletter of the Insurance Fraud Program of the Virginia State Police

THE “FRAUD FIGHTERS” AWARDS

The Insurance Fraud Program of the Virginia State Police is pleased to announce a new award program – The “Fraud Fighters” Award. We encourage you to consider those individuals who go the extra mile to Stamp Out Fraud in Virginia as candidates to receive this award. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Pam Jewell at (804) 323-2850 or pjewell@vsp.state.va.us.

Purpose

The purpose of the “Fraud Fighters” Awards program is to assist in stemming the growing incidence of insurance fraud in Virginia by recognizing individuals for their special efforts in insurance fraud reduction.

Sponsor

The Virginia Department of State Police, Insurance Fraud Program.

Eligibility

Any individual who has made exemplary efforts in helping to reduce insurance fraud in Virginia is eligible for the award. Likely candidates will come from the following categories:

- Law Enforcement/Commonwealth’s Attorneys
- Insurance Industry

Awards

The awards will be presented annually during Virginia’s Insurance Fraud Awareness Week.

The first awards will be presented on Thursday, May 12, 2005, at a special luncheon meeting at the Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Special Investigation Units Annual Training Seminar at the Holiday Inn Select Koger South Conference Center in Richmond.

Nominations

Nomination forms will be available beginning March 1 at www.stampoutfraud.com or by contacting Pam Jewell. Supporting attachments will be accepted.

Nominations for the first year are due on or before April 1, 2005.

FRAUD *Fighters*

Send nominations to:

Pam Jewell
Insurance Fraud Program
Support Services Division

Via mail:

808 Moorefield Park Drive
Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23235

Via fax:

(804) 323-2183

Via e-mail:

pjewell@vsp.state.va.us

Judging:

Winners will be selected by the “Fraud Fighters” Awards committee, made up of representatives of law enforcement and the insurance industry.

“IT’S RAINING FRAUD”

What: The 13th Annual Fraud Awareness Training Seminar put on by the Virginia Chapter of the International Association of Special Investigation Units

When: May 10–12, 2005

Where: Holiday Inn Select Koger South Conference Center
1021 Koger Center Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23235

Contact: Jerry Altieri, Nationwide Insurance
(540) 265-1547
ALTIERJ@Nationwide.com

This year’s seminar will include expert presentations on spoliation of evidence, vehicle theft identification, fire investigation and safety, appliance evaluation, subrogation, workers compensation, causality claims investigation, and medical fraud identification and prosecution. Attendees will be eligible to earn CIFI and CEU credits. The number of credits available for each class will be posted on the Website and included in the seminar brochure.

The cost of the seminar includes continental breakfast, refreshment breaks, lunch, educational handouts and lots of door prizes! Industry vendors will also be present. The seminar begins at 8 a.m. with registration at 7:30 a.m. The Virginia Law Enforcement Awards (LEO) ceremony, sponsored by Help Eliminate Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.), will be part of a special lunch presentation on May 11th.



The LEO Awards recognizes the special efforts of law enforcement officers to reduce auto theft, which is a frequent element of insurance fraud. On Thursday, May 12, participants will be entertained by a surprise guest during lunch when the first, annual “Fraud Fighters” awards will be presented.

CIFI testing will be available on May 10, from 9 a.m. - Noon. Advance registration is required. For more details on the CIFI testing, contact Philip Wong at (804) 662-6523.

Registration forms and additional information are available on the Virginia Chapter Website – www.vaiaisu.com. Don’t miss this exciting training opportunity!

FORE FOR FRAUD!



The Independence Golf Club, 600 Founders Bridge Blvd., Midlothian, will be the site of the annual VA IASIU golf tournament on May 10. Shotgun starts begin at 1 p.m. Contact Jeff Spencer at (804) 379-7086 or (800) 238-3099 for more information or click on www.vaiaisu.com. Independence Golf Club is Richmond’s newest and most upscale daily-fee golf course designed by world renowned Tom Fazio.

NEW CAPTAIN PICKS UP FIGHT AGAINST INSURANCE FRAUD IN VIRGINIA

The Virginia State Police (VSP) recently announced Lieutenant Robert L. Tavenner’s promotion to the rank of Captain. In his new position, Tavenner will head up the newly created Support Services Division, which includes the Insurance Fraud and Help Eliminate Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) programs.

During his 25 years with the VSP, Tavenner has been assigned to the Field Operations division, Training division, Narcotics division, White Collar Crime Units, Legal Unit and most recently the department’s Bomb / Arson program. For the last ten years, Tavenner has served as one of the department’s legislative liaisons to the General Assembly and has been involved in monitoring and drafting legislation. In addition to his career with the VSP, Tavenner has also served as a prosecutor for the city of Petersburg.

Captain Robert L. Tavenner



Tavenner has a B.S. from Virginia Commonwealth University and a J.D. from the University of Richmond. He is also a member of the Virginia Bar and a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

FRAUD FOLLIES

The Case of the Missing Softball Equipment

A Fairfax County man filed a claim with his insurance company in May 2003 alleging his vehicle was burglarized. According to the claimant his car's window was broken and, among other items taken, more than \$2,000 in professional softball gear was stolen. When he filed his claim, he was told that his automobile policy covered only the broken window and not the stolen contents. So in July 2003 he obtained renter's insurance and then filed a report with Fairfax County Police in January 2004 alleging another theft to the same vehicle. He also made a claim on his renter's policy for the items that were supposedly stolen from the car. The claims rep who took the Fairfax County man's claim observed that the man was claiming an expensive amount of softball equipment similar to his May 2003 claim. The claim was subsequently forwarded to the insurance company's SIU department and to the Virginia State Police. During questioning by Special Agent Robert Hindenlang the claimant identified items he submitted on his most recent claim as the same items he said were stolen in May 2003. The man was charged with one felony count of Attempting to Obtain Money by False Pretense in Albemarle County where the claim was filed. Fairfax County police also charged him with filing a false police report. He pled guilty to the charge in Albemarle County and was ordered to pay more than \$500 in restitution to the insurance company. He is currently awaiting sentencing in Albemarle County and trial for the charge in Fairfax County.

False Police Report Leads to Arrest for Fraud

In November 2003, police in Prince William County, Va. discovered a Nissan SUV that had crashed into a telephone pole. The driver of the crash fled the scene prior to its discovery. Officers of the Prince William County Police Department tried to locate the SUV's owner at her residence, but she didn't answer the door until the next morning. After being told about the crash, the owner filed a police report stating that the vehicle had been stolen prior to the crash. She told her insurance company the same thing when she made her claim. Including the utility pole and her SUV, the claim was assessed at more than \$18,000. She was interviewed in April 2004 by Special Agent Robert Hindenlang and admitted she was driving the vehicle at the time of the crash and had been drinking just prior to the crash. The claim was later denied by the insurance company. She was charged with one felony

charge of Attempting to Obtain Money by False Pretense, and the Prince William County PD also charged her with making a false police report. She was ordered by the Prince William County General District Court to pay \$200 restitution to the Prince William County PD and to the VSP for the time used to investigate her false report. The felony charge was dismissed upon her pleading guilty to the false report and making restitution.



He Just Wanted to Keep on Truckin'

The claimant reported that his 1999 Chevrolet pickup truck had brake failure and ran off the side of a mountain on his father's farm in Russell County, Va. The truck was a total loss. When the truck was examined closely, it was found that a retaining clip and pin had been removed from the brake pedal assembly under the dash of the vehicle. Investigators determined the retaining clip had to have been removed by a tool, so the insured's claim of brake failure was not credible. The claimant was arrested by Senior Special Agent Bill Whitt and charged with Obtaining Money by False Pretense. He pled guilty to a misdemeanor and received a one-year sentence suspended for 10 years during which he must pay \$15,000 in restitution to the insurance company.

Double Dipper Arrested for Fraud

An Orange County man's 1989 Nissan Maxima was damaged to the tune of \$980 when someone backed into the rear of the vehicle. The other driver's insurance company paid for the damage. A month later, the claimant's vehicle was again bumped from behind. He told the other driver and the Virginia State Trooper investigating the accident that the damage on the rear of his car came from another accident a couple of weeks earlier. He then filed a claim with the other driver's insurance company
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and was paid \$1,117. Special Agent Dennis Dodson investigated the claims and, based on photos and interviews, determined the damage came from the original crash. He was arrested on the charge of Obtaining Money by False Pretense. The case is currently awaiting trial in Orange County Circuit Court.

What Are Friends For!

On Aug. 7, a Barboursville, Va., woman made the mistake of loaning her 1992 BMW to a friend who then totaled the car in neighboring Albemarle County. The following day, Aug. 8, the owner of the car called her insurance company to obtain full coverage on her car. She later made a claim on her wrecked car stating that the crash had occurred Aug. 9. Special Agent Dennis Dodson investigated and, based on the accident report filed with Albemarle County Police Department, arrested the woman and charged her with Attempting to Obtain Money by False Pretense. The case is awaiting trial in Orange County Circuit Court.

Claim for Damaged Air Conditioner Blows Hot Air

The insured filed a home owner's claim with her insurance company for lightning damage to her air conditioning unit. A lightning certificate from M & M Heating & Air Conditioning was received by the insurance company. A repair bill for \$1,750, prepared by the heating and air conditioning company, was submitted to the insurance company by the insured. The insurance company could not find any evidence that M & M Heating and Air Conditioning existed. Further investigation revealed that a new a/c unit had not been installed at the insured's home and the original unit, claimed to have been damaged by lightening, was working. Both the damage report and repair bill were found to be bogus. The insured and the "repairman" were arrested by Special Agent Dennis Dodson and charged with Attempting to Obtain Money by False Pretense. Both are awaiting preliminary hearing in Orange General District Court.

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VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
Insurance Fraud Program

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