

## **Western Loudoun County Sheriff's Quarterly Meeting: 10/27/2020**

47 West Loudoun Street, Round Hill, VA 20141 540-258-3750

Captain Greg Ahlemann: [greg.Ahlemann@loudoun.gov](mailto:greg.Ahlemann@loudoun.gov)

Captain Ahlemann began the meeting by explaining the planned agenda would proceed and time afterwards would be dedicated to Traffic issues, as a number of Blue Ridge Mountain Civic Association (BRMCA) members were in attendance.

The general meeting included:

1. Introduction of station officers, and their roles
2. A summary of crime statistics for Loudoun County in general: when compared to 11 surrounding counties, Loudoun's statistics for various crimes are much lower, based on 2019 to the present data. The only increase has been in the number of firing of weapons, attributed to Covid virus restrictions for social gathering, as people seek outdoor activities.
3. Western Loudoun in general has much lower incidents of crime when compared to the eastern part of the state, but the sheriff's office covers a much larger geographic area in the west
4. An overview of school and youth programs, including opportunities for students to attend an actual court trial, DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and traffic safety. Loudoun Sheriff Mike Chapman was named the 2017 U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency/ D.A.R.E. Law Enforcement Executive of the Year.
5. An example of one crime arena the Western division has dealt with recently: a number of cars in Purcellville being entered and items stolen. An arrest has been made; others are pending. The perpetrators simply went around checking door handles and trunks; if they were unlocked they entered the vehicle and stole items. Attendees were advised to always keep car doors, garage doors, and home doors locked to avoid crimes of opportunity.
6. Avoid using social media to share vacation plans and dates. If you are going to be away for a weekend or an extended period of time, you can notify the sheriff's office in advance and extra patrols will be make the rounds in your neighborhood.

Captain Ahlemann dedicated additional time to discuss traffic issues on Blue Ridge Mountain Road (BRMR). 15 members of the BRMCA were present; a handout of photos documenting traffic concerns over the past few months was provided. Discussion points:

1. Captain Ahlemann attended a meeting recently with VDOT, Loudoun County officials, ATC representative, Clarke county representatives, and Tony Buffington. The meeting was in response to an email from Margit Royal, with attached video provided by Kristen Marusich documenting an extreme backup of cars in both directions on BRMR. Suggestions were being discussed, including widening of 601, a right hand turn lane, and gravel paths along the shoulders. He pointed out that gravel pedestrian paths along the shoulders would only invite additional foot traffic.
2. There have been a few incidents at Bear Chase Brewery (BCB) to which law enforcement (LE) was called, but there have not been an extraordinary number.
3. LE cannot set up DUI checkpoints in the VDOT parking lot, or deliberately in proximity to BCB.
4. It is not illegal to walk on the road if there are no sidewalks. He can look into acquiring signage: Walk Facing Traffic.
5. BRMCA members expressed a desire to set up a meeting with the personnel Capt. Ahlemann met with; although he would not divulge names, he could give a list of relevant entities in general.
6. BRMCA members expressed concern about emergency vehicle access when traffic is excessive in both directions of BRMR. Capt. Ahlemann said if necessary responders would

drive against traffic, or go up the middle of the road, and yes, response time would likely be slowed down.

7. BRMCA members asked if LE was brought into discussions when the permitting process for BCB was on-going. NO.

8. It was pointed out that we recognize BCB is an established entity. A primary goal as Loudoun County undertakes zoning re-writes it to prevent additional establishments from setting up business along BRMR.