



At the Corner of *Courthouse & Justice*

Mission Statement

The mission of the Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's Office is to help make the County of Prince George a safe place to live, work and play by prosecuting those cases where there is sufficient, legally admissible evidence in a manner that: (1) respects the dignity of those who are the unfortunate victims of crime and (2) promotes the ends of justice.

Community

Outreach

Members of the Commonwealth Attorney's Office are available to make appearances and presentations to civic and community groups.

If your group or organization wants to schedule a presentation or appearance by a member of the Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, please contact the office staff at (804) 733-2790.



A message from the Commonwealth's Attorney

I've had the honor and privilege of serving as the Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince George County since January of 2004. I am proud that my office is open and accessible to members of the public. It is in this same spirit that I welcome you to the first issue of our newsletter, ***At the Corner of Courthouse & Justice***.

Our citizens deserve and expect a safe environment in which to live, work, play and raise their families. We are proud to do our part in helping make the crime rate in Prince George County among the lowest in the region. We believe that the best way to deter criminal behavior is to prosecute those who engage in criminal behavior in a manner which encourages them and others who would commit such crimes to refrain from doing so in the future.

We strongly believe that community outreach is an important part of crime prevention. You will see staff and attorneys from my office working with community partners, such as the police department, churches and schools on a wide-variety of crime prevention measures and community outreach initiatives. We invite you to join us in these efforts.

It's a pleasure to go to work each morning with a very dedicated staff that works hard and is prepared to help the citizens of our county fight crime. Anita Pettaway leads an administrative staff that includes Sarah Carson and Brenda Saunders. They help move a high volume of cases through the criminal justice system in a professional manner. Our Victim/Witness Coordinator, Natalie Mays, is eager to help provide victims with needed services. The attorneys, Eric Livingston, Mark Barnard and Cecilie Hamilton work hard to bring cases into the courtroom that are thoroughly prepared and serve the ends of justice.

We look forward to working for you at the corner of courthouse and justice.

Jay "C" Paul



DUTIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEYS' OFFICE

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office for the County of Prince George prosecutes all felony and misdemeanor cases in the Prince George Circuit Court, the Prince George General District Court, and the Prince George Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

In addition to these duties, the Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's office is also responsible for the following:

- Responding to Motions filed in any criminal case;
- Providing legal advice, when called upon, to local law enforcement in the investigation of criminal offenses;
- Providing legal training to local officials and law enforcement officers;
- Filing legal actions to force individuals to forfeit property and money from crimes;
- Answering Petitions for Appeal in the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court of Virginia; and
- Participating in the Hopewell, Prince George, Surry Drug Court.

This office does not handle civil cases such as divorces, landlord/tenant disputes, estates, wills, real estate, etc.

Additional Circuit Court Criminal Day

The Prince George Circuit Court was meeting on the 1st, 2nd and 5th Thursdays for the regular criminal docket. In 2012, the caseload was an average of over 25 defendants per criminal court day in circuit court. The number of cases was getting to be unmanageable for everyone involved in the criminal justice system that practiced in the Circuit Court of Prince George.

A statistical analysis was completed by the Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's Office which showed that the Prince George Circuit Court had one of the heaviest caseloads in the 6th Circuit per court date. Additionally, the number of contested criminal trials per court docket in the Prince George Circuit Court was the highest in the 6th Circuit.

Rather than plea bargaining our way out of this situation, statistics were presented to Chief Judge W. Allan Sharrett and an additional court day was added on the 4th Wednesday of each month. This has enabled the Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's office continue to evaluate cases on the basis of their merits instead of on the sole basis of time considerations. This extra day benefits everyone, especially those who are unfortunate enough to be victims of crime.

Training for Prince George Law Enforcement Officers

The Prince George Commonwealth's Attorney's Office provides legal update training each year for Prince George Law Enforcement Officers (LEO's). Approximately two hours of legal update training was provided to all police officers, auxiliary police officers and Sheriff's deputies. This training updates the LEO's on changes to the law by the general assembly and by court rulings during the past year. This training was offered on six separate occasions to account for shift changes, vacations, days off and to minimize the need for any overtime. The sessions also included time for LEO's and the Commonwealth's Attorney to discuss and address any areas which needed additional consideration by either the Prince George Police Department or the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office.



Courtroom Training for Crater Criminal Justice Training Academy

For the past several years, attorneys from the Prince George County Commonwealth's Attorney's office have provided classroom and mock courtroom training for the Basic Law Enforcement Academy at the Crater Criminal Justice Academy. The goal of the training is to teach the future officers how to prepare for court testimony and testify in the following: traffic court; legal and administrative proceedings; before grand juries; in criminal trials; evidence suppression hearings; implied consent hearings; probable cause hearings and presentations before grand juries.

On August 2, 2013, the 81st Basic Law Enforcement Academy participated in courtroom testimony training. A classroom training session, led by Commonwealth's Attorney, Jay "C" Paul, was held in the morning at the Crater Criminal Justice Academy. Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys, Eric Livingston and Mark Barnard, led the class through mock trials in the Circuit Court of Prince George during the afternoon training session.



Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Eric Livingston, provided training and information on asset forfeitures as a part of the recruits' drug training.

Commonwealth's Attorney Participates in Torch Run for Special Olympics



Commonwealth's Attorney, Jay "C" Paul, was proud to join officers from the Prince George Police Department, the 81 Basic Law Enforcement Academy, Riverside Regional Jail, Riverside Criminal Justice Agency and others from the County Offices of Prince George County in the Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics. This effort unites officers from law enforcement agencies and corrections departments across the state in an effort to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics Virginia.

Knowledge = Safety

The English statesman, Winston Churchill, once said, "If you have knowledge, let others light their candles with it." The Commonwealth's Attorney's office is in a unique situation in which we can share information with people that can make a real difference in their lives. Quite often, we see people who have had something bad happen to them. It is our belief that sharing information with people can either help them take preventive measures to keep them from being a crime victim or help them minimize the impact of criminal behavior of others directed at them. To this end, the Commonwealth's Attorney's office has installed and maintains two bulletin boards and pamphlet holders with information for citizens just outside of its office in the courthouse .

Among the information included is the following :

Victim 's Rights

Senior Citizens Handbook

Identity Theft

Domestic Relations Rights

Preventing Crime



Food for Thought

It is not what you do for
your children,
but what you have taught
them to do for themselves,
that will make them
successful human beings.

Ann Landers

Tri-Cities Regional Strike Force

The Prince George County Commonwealth's Attorney's office has joined the newly formed Tri-Cities Regional Strike Force, a pilot program created by the Office of the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety.

The Strike Force is a strategic planning team that combines efforts by multiple law enforcement agencies to tackle crime that affects more than one locale in the Tri-City area.

Criminal justice agencies involved include the following: Department of Criminal Justice Services; U.S. Attorney General's Office; Commonwealth's Attorneys from the cities of Colonial Heights, Petersburg and Hopewell, and the counties of Prince George and Dinwiddie; the Virginia Attorney General's Office; the state Department of Corrections; and the state Department of Juvenile Justice.

This is a positive development for Prince George County. The criminal element doesn't always keep its activity contained within city and county boundaries. By combining resources, we increase the ability to catch those who commit crimes without regard to jurisdictional borders.

Anyone who is caught violating the law in Prince George County will be prosecuted in Prince George County to the fullest extent of the law by our Commonwealth's Attorney's office.

Resident Concealed Handgun Permits

Virginia Resident Concealed Handgun Permits are issued by the circuit court of the county or city in which the applicant resides. From January 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013, the Circuit Court of Prince George issued 474 concealed weapons permits. Applications can be picked up at the Circuit Court Clerk's Office located in the Prince George Courthouse or downloaded from the Virginia State Police website (www.vsp.state.va.us). Due to the large volume of applications, the clerk's office suggest you do the following prior to arriving at the courthouse to help make the transaction easier for everyone involved:

- 1) Bring the \$50.00 Application fee. This must be cash, check or money order. Credit cards are not accepted.
- 2) Bring a self-addressed stamped envelope so the permit can be properly returned to you.
- 3) Bring documentation which proves your handgun competency.

For more information about obtaining a Resident Concealed Handgun Permit, please consult the Virginia State Police website (www.vsp.state.va.us).

Meet Mark Barnard —Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney

Mark W. Barnard joined the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office in July of 2012.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and obtained his law degree from Seton Hall University. Previously, Mark worked in a general civil practice in Richmond from 2005 through 2010, often times representing small business owners in General District and Circuit Court. In 2011, he began working as a magistrate in the City of Richmond.



In his spare time, Mark can be found outdoors, whether it be hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains, fishing the Chesapeake Bay, or simply biking around town.

Mark loves his work here and is looking forward to continuing working with his colleagues as they pursue the goal of making Prince George County a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

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PROUD SUPPORTERS OF:

