

## News from the West Virginia Troopers Association

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### West Virginia Troopers are requesting help from State Leaders

Charleston, WVa. – The WVTA will be asking our State Leaders to address the growing problems that the State Police is faced with within the 2010 Legislative Session, requesting that they increase the manpower of the State Police to no less than eight-hundred (800) Troopers to properly begin addressing the problems with crime within our State and reverse the direction and trend that the State has unfortunately been moving with crime.

The West Virginia State Police has been working with far fewer resources and manpower than needed to provide law enforcement services to our State. The 2008 Legislative Audit identified that the West Virginia State Police provides inadequate Law Enforcement Coverage to its citizens, citing that there are only 1.69 officers for every 1000 residents, with the national average being 2.5 officers for every 1000 residents.

Major crimes have increased along with the responsibilities and workload of the West Virginia State Police. The **criminals within West Virginia have most recently gained an eighty four percent (84%) chance of committing a major crime** and never being **caught**. These crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. In 1998 WV was ranked 49<sup>th</sup> within the FBI statistics for major crimes committed per 100,000 people. In 2008, we are now ranked 36<sup>th</sup>, surpassing twelve (12) states with major crimes committed.

Based on a report that was provided by the Division of Criminal Justice Services in 2001, they estimated that 147 sex offenders would be released from West Virginia State Prisons each year for the next ten years. During that same time period, the West Virginia State Police Sex Offender Registry contained 1468 sex offenders. We currently have over 2800 sex offenders. If the trend and prediction continues, our sex offender registry will grow to over 4200 sex offenders within the State by 2019. This is just one of many areas where the State Troopers responsibilities continue to increase, yet our manpower and resources are decreasing. We have seen our manpower decrease from over 700 Troopers that we had during 2000 to now only 633 currently working the streets. We cannot provide adequate law enforcement services to our citizens if we do not prepare in advance for duties and responsibilities that we have. During the next two years the State Police will have **forty seven (47) Troopers** become eligible for retirement. A newly hired Trooper's training and probationary period extends for eighteen months. Troopers hired today will not be completely

trained and released on his/her own, capable of providing law enforcement services to our citizens until 2011.

“The State Police has just not adequately been provided the needed manpower to appropriately address the increase in crime and added responsibilities. The sex offenders alone that the State Police is responsible for has grown to over 2800, within the State of West Virginia. The State Police takes these responsibilities serious and to properly keep track of just the 2800 sex offenders around the State, takes a considerable amount of time from other criminal investigations.” John W. Smith Jr-President of the WVTA said. “We have also seen the increasing crime related to the internet which unfortunately has involved children, leading to the creation of our Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC) to properly investigate and prosecute these serious crimes,” Smith said.

The State Police has the statutory mission of providing “statewide enforcement of criminal and traffic laws with emphasis on providing basic enforcement and citizen protection from criminal depredation throughout the state and maintaining the safety of the state’s public streets, roads and highways.”

As the information reflects, the State Police cannot successfully complete the mission without an adequate number of Troopers. **Thirty three (33)** detachments have **five (5)** or **less** Troopers working with **twenty six (26)** of those detachments having **four (4)** or **less** Troopers required to provide twenty-four hour coverage. As you can see, with so few Troops, it is very difficult to provide adequate 24 hour coverage for these areas around the State.