



MEDIA RELEASE

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Text Messaging Tip Service

St. Mary's County citizens can now send text messages to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. For the first time, mobile phone users in St. Mary's County now have the ability to provide anonymous crime fighting tips through the power of anonymous text messaging and Web Tips. The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office utilizes three different methods of receiving crime tips: Phone tips, Web page tips, and now Text tips.

"The popularity of text messaging has created a significant opportunity for the public to help law enforcement agencies fight crime. The ability for any citizen who owns a cellular telephone to assist in crime solving is of great importance to communities globally and we are excited to play a pivotal role in the transmission of these crime fighting tips." (Sheriff Tim Cameron)

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office implemented tip texting into the Crime Solvers Program. Information (tips) may be anonymously received and securely replied to with complete confidence. The service, TipSoft SMS, was built specifically to allow text messaging informants to remain anonymous by encrypting the text messages and routing them through several secure servers, protecting the personal details of the text messenger.

Text tipping allows the Sheriff's Office to respond by text message to the originating cell phone without ever knowing the identity of the individual who left the tip. The user's information is always given an alias and a unique ID before being sent. This secure application allows the tipster and the investigator to have two-way dialog while always keeping the user's identity completely anonymous.

Tipsters can send short message service (SMS) tips from their cellular phones or personal digital assistant (PDA) by texting "**TIP239**" plus your message to "**CRIMES**" (**274637**). After sending the message the user is given an anonymous alias identifier. The user can be engaged in a 2-way dialogue with the Sheriff's Office to elicit more information.

The Sheriff's Office encourages everyone to report information about any non-urgent illegal activity, such as unsolved cases, vandalism, theft, the sale and distribution of drugs or any other information the citizen deems important for the security of the school and the community. Since tip texting has been integrated into the Crime Solvers Program individuals who text in their tips may eligible for a \$1,000.00 reward if that tip leads to an arrest or indictment.

For further information on Tip Texting visit <http://www.smscrimetips.com> or contact Captain Edward Willenborg, Patrol Division Commander, 301-475-4200 x1998.