



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
April 28, 2010

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CRIME FIGHTING TEXT AND WEB MESSAGING TIP SERVICE LAUNCHED BY PORTSMOUTH CRIME LINE

For the first time, mobile phone users across Hampton Roads now have the ability to provide anonymous crime fighting tips through the power of anonymous text and web messaging. The Portsmouth Police Department, Portsmouth Crime Line and Anderson Software, have joined together to provide this service which allows citizens to send anonymous tips by sending a text message from a mobile phone or online.

The information is anonymously received and securely replied to with complete confidence. The service 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 informant.

Tipsoft SMS also allows police to respond by text message to the originating cell phone without ever knowing the identity of the individual who left the tip. The user is given an alias and a unique ID before being sent. This secure application allows the tipster and the Crime Line Coordinator to have two-way dialog while always keeping the user's identity completely anonymous.

Portsmouth Crime Line and the Portsmouth Police Department encourages everyone to report information about any non-urgent illegal activity, such as fugitives, theft, and distribution of drugs, homicides or information about crimes that are being planned in the community or in the schools. Portsmouth Crime Line expects to increase the number of tips after students learn more about the text tipping.



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Portsmouth Police Chief Edward Hargis stated, “The Portsmouth Police Department is continually searching for various ways to combat crime in our community. The Crime Line Text and Web Messaging Tip Service offers an opportunity for people who are reluctant to call the police, to provide anonymous information to us that could help prevent or solve a crime. Knowing that young people prefer to communicate by text, I encourage our teenagers and young adults to get involved and text their tips to us whenever they have information relating to a crime or a dangerous situation.”

Simply text the word “Portsmouth plus your message” to 274637 (CRIMES), and the dialog will start. If your information leads to an arrest, recovery of stolen property, guns or drugs, you will receive a return message. The tipster can stop the dialog at any time, by simply texting the word “STOP.” At any time the tipster can call the 1-888-LOCK-U-UP number and speak directly to the Coordinator. If inquiring about a reward, it is best to call between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

Portsmouth Crime Line was provided funding through the Hampton Roads Regional Crime Line/Crime Stoppers Committee, which consists of members from all local area Crime Line and Crime Stoppers programs. Funds raised at the annual Top Cop Awards Banquet allow projects such as this to succeed. Ross Forster, Chairman of the Hampton Roads Regional Crime Line/Crime Stoppers Committee and member of the Virginia Beach Crime Stoppers Board of Directors stated, “As technology changes, so must our local Crime Line and Crime Stoppers programs. We need to give citizens a safe, secure and quick contact method to keep our cities safe places to live, work and prosper. With the implementation of Web and Text tipping in Portsmouth all these goals can be met.”

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