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## A Virginia Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### The 88<sup>th</sup> Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival

**WINCHESTER** – The streets of Old Town Winchester will soon fill with hundreds of thousands of people coming together to celebrate the 88<sup>th</sup> Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. The Festival kicks off Friday, April 24, with the Bloomin' Wine Fest and the festivities continue through Sunday, May 3. The Winchester Police Department is committed to ensuring the safety and security of local residents and festival goers. There will be a strong police presence at events throughout the week. The public is asked to assist in ensuring everyone's safety by doing the following:

- Staying aware of your surroundings
- Reporting any suspicious activity immediately to law enforcement
- Keeping your belongings with you at all times

The Apple Blossom Festival continues to keep safety a priority and will have bag checks at the entrances into a number of events. We strongly recommend that guests do not bring bags, backpacks, handbags, and purses to events unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. If an item is left unattended it is subject to search and disposal. Diaper bags that have necessary items for small children are acceptable; however they will be subject to searches. The following items will be prohibited at the Bloomin' Wine Fest, Weekend in the Park, all tent events, and the Coronation:

- Backpacks/large bags 14 X 9
- Alcohol
- Weapons, knives of any kind
- Any items that could be used or construed to be a weapon
- Illegal drugs
- Bottles, cans, thermoses, coolers
- Animals (except for service)
- Aerosol/spray cans
- Food, snack, beverages
- Noisemakers
- Exception: diaper bags

## **Detour Route**

The detour route goes into effect on Friday, May 1 at 3:30 p.m. and will remain in effect until the end of the Firefighter's Parade around 8:30 p.m.

On Saturday, May 2 the route goes into effect at 8 a.m. until the end of the Grand Feature Parade around 7 p.m.

You can find maps, detours, and parking information on the City of Winchester's website, [www.winchesterva.gov](http://www.winchesterva.gov).

We strongly encourage anyone who is not attending a festival event to utilize alternate routes: Interstate 81 and Routes 37, 50, 7, and 522. Drivers in the City of Winchester should expect heavy congestion and delays. We ask for the public's patience and cooperation with traffic changes.

## **Parking Restrictions**

No parking signs will be posted on Thursday, April 30. The parking restrictions go into effect and are strictly enforced beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, May 1 and continuing until 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 2. There are no exceptions to these restrictions, even for residents. We will attempt to locate the owner of a vehicle that is not following parking restrictions to avoid towing. If we are unable to locate the owner, the vehicle will be ticketed and towed. If your vehicle has been towed, you will need to contact the Winchester Police Department's non-emergency number at 540-662-4131 to find out where to pick up your vehicle. Various towing companies will be utilized to assist in the enforcement.

Parking for downtown events will be available in all four Autoparks to include Braddock Street, Court Square, George Washington, and Loudoun Street.

Handicapped parking is available at each Apple Blossom sponsored event. We recommend that residents utilize downtown parking garages for the Grand Feature Parade.

Handicapped parking for Weekend in the Park will be available in front of the War Memorial Building.

## **Animals/Pets**

Animals are prohibited in festival areas during specified events. Please refer to Section 5-15 of the Winchester City Code.

## **Children**

Each year children are separated from their parents during the festival. Parents and guardians are asked to take a picture of their children with their cell phone and to also know what their children are wearing to assist in locating them if they become lost. Inform your children that if they become lost to go to a uniformed police officer for help. If you need to report a lost child, call the Winchester Police Department's non-emergency number at 540-662-4131.

## **Alcoholic Beverages**

Persons attending any festival event on public streets or grounds are prohibited from consuming alcoholic beverages or being in possession of an open container. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons 21 years and older is allowed at some festival events within approved areas and restaurants where state licenses have been obtained. Officers will be actively enforcing laws pertaining to open containers and drunk in public. If you plan to drink, remember to drink responsibly and designate a sober driver before you leave home.

## **Public Works**

The Public Works team deploys more than 265 barricades and 200 cones throughout the city to be used for traffic and crowd control. The team puts together 2,000 trash boxes that will be used at the festival. In 2014 the festival generated about 39 tons of trash on Friday and Saturday with the Wine Fest generating 2.5 tons of trash. The trash is picked up after each parade and it is collected Saturday morning following the fireworks held on Friday. There will be recycling containers at some of the events; however, residents are encouraged to take items home that can be recycled. Residents whose regular trash pickup is on Fridays should place trashcans by the curb Thursday night. The trash will be picked up early Friday morning.

## **Additional Resources**

The Winchester Police Department will be utilizing the Apple Blossom Festival's New Smartphone App to keep local residents and festival attendees informed about emergency situations including traffic hazards and areas to avoid. Those who sign up will be notified through push notifications. We encourage the public to download the Apple Blossom Festival App today!

If anyone has questions regarding street closures, parking, and detour routes, the Winchester Volunteers in Policing will be available by phone Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m. until noon to answer questions. The numbers are 540-545-4737 and 540-545-4738. We strongly encourage the use of these numbers over the non-emergency telephone number due to the number of calls received by our Emergency Communications Center. Please refrain from using 911 unless you have an emergency.

## **Agency Assistance**

The Winchester Police Department's entire force will be providing security for the festival and will be assisted by a number of agencies. We would like to thank the Virginia Defense Force, the Winchester City Sheriff's Office, Frederick County Sheriff's Office, Virginia State Police, Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center, Mount Weather Police, the FBI, Northwest Virginia Regional Drug and Gang Task Forces, Winchester Emergency Communications Center, Emergency Management Coordinator Lynn Miller, and civilian employees with the Winchester Police Department.

We wish everyone a safe and happy Bloom!