



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield
Program Title: Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit
Program Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Donald Huff
Title: Major
Department: Chesterfield Sheriff's Office
Telephone: 804-751-4415 Website: https://www.chesterfield.gov/765
Email: huffd@chesterfield.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.
Title: County Administrator
Signature: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Digitally signed by Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.
DN: cn=Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D., o=Chesterfield County, ou=County Administration,
email=caseyjoe@chesterfield.gov, c=US
Date: 2023.06.27 12:17:47 -04'00'

VACO Submission Brief Overview- Chesterfield Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit

As the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office continues to move forward in the beginning of the 21st Century by improving efficiencies and effectiveness at every turn it looks to bring back a function that was prominent back in the 19th Century to help achieve that, and that is the establishment of a mounted unit. In an age where law enforcement has been quick to embrace technology, with body cameras, in-car computers, and drones, all of which the Chesterfield Sheriff's Office embraces and utilizes, the ancient practice of using mounted units has endured its place despite the onset of technology. Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource.

Over the past several years, we have seen an increase in protests and civil unrest not only in America but across the globe. During these events it was observed that mounted units played a large part in patrolling urban areas and providing crowd control during large gatherings. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between hard surfaces such as roads, sidewalks, and parking lots as well as landscaped areas such as lawns, courtyards, and community trails. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between these areas and surfaces within minutes minimizing the potential of damaging grounds or other property unlike the use of a car, truck, or other motorized vehicle. The higher vantage point provides greater ability to see inside of parked vehicles and a longer range of view while scanning for threats or other safety concerns.

The Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource which is why it was implemented within our organization.

VACO Submission Executive Summary- Chesterfield Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit

As the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office continues to move forward in the beginning of the 21st Century by improving efficiencies and effectiveness at every turn it looks to bring back a function that was prominent back in the 19th Century to help achieve that, and that is the establishment of a mounted unit. In an age where law enforcement has been quick to embrace technology, with body cameras, in-car computers, and drones, all of which the Chesterfield Sheriff's Office embraces and utilizes, the ancient practice of using mounted units has endured its place despite the onset of technology. Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource.

Over the past several years, we have seen an increase in protests and civil unrest not only in America but across the globe. During these events it was observed that mounted units played a large part in patrolling urban areas and providing crowd control during large gatherings. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between hard surfaces such as roads, sidewalks, and parking lots as well as landscaped areas such as lawns, courtyards, and community trails. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between these areas and surfaces within minutes minimizing the potential of damaging grounds or other property unlike the use of a car, truck, or other motorized vehicle. The higher vantage point provides greater ability to see inside of parked vehicles and a longer range of view while scanning for threats or other safety concerns.

The Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource which is why it was implemented within our organization.



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



Chesterfield County, Virginia

Karl S. Leonard, Sheriff



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MOUNTED UNIT

VACO Application 2023

Abstract of the Program

As the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office continues to move forward in the beginning of the 21st Century by improving efficiencies and effectiveness at every turn it looks to bring back a function that was prominent back in the 19th Century to help achieve that, and that is the establishment of a mounted unit. In an age where law enforcement has been quick to embrace technology, with body cameras, in-car computers, and drones, all of which the Chesterfield Sheriff's Office embraces and utilizes, the ancient practice of using mounted units has endured its place despite the onset of technology. Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource.

The Problem or Need Addressed by the Program

Over the past several years, we have seen an increase in protests and civil unrest not only in America but across the globe. During these events it was observed that mounted units played a large part in patrolling urban areas and providing crowd control during large gatherings. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between hard surfaces such as roads, sidewalks, and parking lots as well as landscaped areas such as lawns, courtyards, and community trails. A mounted unit provides the ability to transition between these areas and surfaces within minutes minimizing the potential of damaging grounds or other property unlike the use of a car, truck, or other motorized vehicle. The higher vantage point provides greater ability to see inside of parked vehicles and a longer range of view while scanning for threats or other safety concerns.

Program Description

As stated earlier, the Chesterfield Sheriff's Office has seen nationwide the value of such units being highlighted and justified for reasons to include increased community policing effectiveness, more effective patrols, serving as a tool for large gatherings, more economical than vehicles, and an excellent search and rescue resource.

Increased community policing effectiveness

Mounted units are exceptional at increasing community support and in a current climate where such an investment is critical to community trust and respect The Mounted Unit excels at every one of those key tenants. Mounted units are excellent "beacons" to a community. People frequently want to come up to the horses where they otherwise wouldn't to an individual officer. This allows for better information gathering, intelligence, and increasing public confidence. Where an officer in a car may move through an area so quickly

others don't or can't notice it, a horse is much more noticeable and likely to be seen. An officer on horseback is as valuable to a situation and the department as 10 officers on foot.

More effective patrols

Mounted units provide a better platform from which to conduct patrols of our three court campuses and jail complex due to the much-improved visual vantage point. The added height and visibility that the horses give their riders allows officers to observe a wider area, but it also allows people in the wider area to see the officers, which helps deter crime and helps people find officers when they need them.

Serve as effective tool for large gatherings

In an era where public gatherings, protest, demonstrations, and marches are becoming more commonplace at our courthouse campuses mounted units can serve as "moving walls" capable of ushering large crowds, or, if necessary, a horse can side-step alongside a single person or small group to separate them. They also serve as a source for information or intelligence during these situations as they are better positioned to observe what is transpiring. If a deputy can identify and minimize causes of specific patterns of crime, the less crime there will be. Having mounted deputies working in conjunction with deputies on foot or in cars makes for a safer environment.

More efficient and economical

When it comes to patrolling limited areas such as the court campuses doing so by vehicles or even quads/gators are more costly and less effective than horses.

Excellent Search and Rescue Platform

The Chesterfield Sheriff's Office maintains an excellent Search and Rescue Team that trains alongside the Piedmont Search and Rescue (PSAR) group. It is often used for searches throughout the region, state and adding a mounted aspect to it allows for easier traversing of some areas otherwise difficult to do so by foot.

Program Cost

The initial cost associated with the mounted unit was \$20,000 which includes the services associated with the boarding and medical care of the horses as well as a trailer to transport them. The unit is comprised of deputy riders who serve in this specialty unit as a secondary responsibility. Moving forward, yearly costs are estimated to be less than the initial startup costs. They will also prove to be much less than providing the same number of vehicles compared to horses when you factor in vehicle cost, maintenance, and fuel.

Program Results/Success

Increased community policing effectiveness

Our mounted units have been utilized throughout our county complex as well as our community outreach functions. While conducting patrols around our courthouses, community members and staff members seem drawn to the mounted units. Whether it is a courthouse staff member taking a much-needed break, another deputy or police officer on official business, a child or adult who has just been in a court case or someone experiencing emotional trauma for whatever reason, the mounted unit seems to provide a sense of comfort for those who need it. At our courthouses and community outreach events, the mounted unit is an attraction that brings about a lot of photos, questions, and law enforcement interaction with our community members.

More effective patrols

Our mounted units have been successful in helping to identify suspects involved in courthouse parking lot disputes and have also been able to provide routes of travel faster than security cameras can focus in on vehicles exiting our parking lots quickly onto the major roadways. Our mounted units have been utilized as perimeter security during our various county board meetings providing up close building patrols where motorized vehicles are unable to access. Our mounted units have been used to locate and identify individuals in parked vehicles in our courthouse parking lots faster than multiple deputies searching for individuals on foot through the same area and having to breakdown the parking lots into a grid type system.

Serve as effective tool for large gatherings

As stated in the previous section, our mounted units have been used as additional security during our various county board meetings to include our Board of Supervisors, School Board, Planning, and other special sessions. The mounted units have patrolled the historic courtyards during these meetings and provided escorts for board members to their vehicles after the meetings concluded, sometimes during the nighttime hours. This has proved to be beneficial. As much as the mounted unit can be friendly and inviting to law abiding community members, it can also be very intimidating to those potentially trying to cause harm or conduct criminal acts.

More efficient and economical

Our mounted units have proven to be effective regarding seamless transitions between our courthouse and county complex areas as well as the miles of recreational trail systems that run through our county complex. The cost of the mounted unit, boarding, medical care, and food come nowhere close to the cost of a vehicle, required maintenance/repair and fuel needed to provide the same amount of security and accessibility as the mounted units provide.

Excellent Search and Rescue Platform

To date, our mounted units have not been called upon to assist with any search and rescue emergency call out functions. Our office along with our state and regional partners find security in knowing that these resources are available should the need arise.

Worthiness of Award

In the short time since its implementation, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from the community members that have interacted with the mounted unit and the social media attention that it has garnered. As stated earlier the unit not only helps exemplify to the public the heritage of a Sheriff's Office with nearly 275 years of history but is a practical resource that is being utilized for patrols, large gatherings, and as an enhancement to our Search and Rescue Team. For these reasons we feel that the Mounted Unit is worthy of being awarded a 2023 VACo Achievement Award.



P.O. Box 940, Chesterfield, Virginia 23832 • Phone: (804) 748-1261 • Fax: (804) 748-5808





