

# VIRGINIA Sheriff



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Sheriff J. D. Diggs  
York County-Poquoson  
2011-2012 Virginia Sheriffs'  
Association President



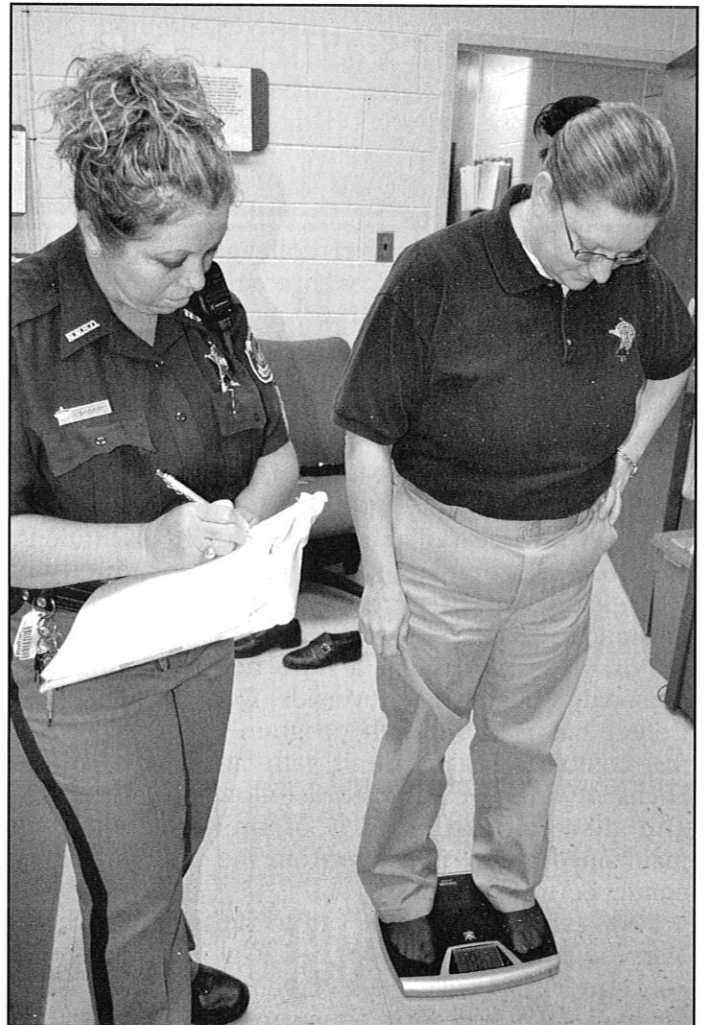
# The Newport News Sheriff's Office Biggest Loser Contest Inspiring Health & Well-Being

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Sergeant Janet Robbins is a huge fan of NBC's hit television show "The Biggest Loser." So she mimicked the show and organized a weight-loss challenge for the Newport News Sheriff's Office. It all started with her own effort to lose weight. She says the Newport News Sheriff's Office Biggest Loser contest was a way to address Deputy health and well-being. "Remember, at any given moment we may have to respond to a signal. That emergency call could be on any floor of the jail or at the courthouse, and we have to run there," she said. Reaction time is slower for those Deputies who are carrying extra weight.

Holly Hicks, Registered Dietician, agrees. Hicks is a registered dietician at the Riverside Wellness and Fitness Center. She explained, "Food plays a vital role in our energy level, alertness and focus. All things important in your law enforcement field." Food is fuel, and you want the right type of fuel. Hicks went on to say, "Certain foods, like carbohydrates, digest quickly. So you might eat a bagel for breakfast and be hungry a couple of hours later." She recommends including proteins in a meal because it will stay with you longer. For example, "add an egg to that breakfast and make the bagel a wheat bagel for fiber, and you will have more energy and won't get hungry right away."

A total of 42 employees enrolled in the Biggest Loser contest. There are Deputies, civilian staff and contract employees all wanting to drop weight and get healthier. Proper diet and exercise can help protect against diabetes, heart disease and cancer—all among the leading causes of death in this country. Deputy Chivagzne Peake is most interested in the health benefits, "I have a lot more energy, and I am losing inches. My uniform is sagging on me." Peake is using her 15-year-old son as her trainer. "He plays football



Christie Sproles weighs in with Sergeant Janet Robbins looking on. Sproles found the contest provided extra encouragement for a personal weight loss program she had already begun.

for Woodside High School. He motivates me and makes sure I'm going to the gym and walking."

The other motivator might be money. Human nature as it is, Sergeant Robbins recognized that looking better and feeling better may not have been enough incentive to get people psyched for the challenge. As part of her rules, Robbins developed a cash prize. Here's how it works—Each contestant puts up \$20 to enroll; they pay a \$1 fee every time they weigh in on a bi-weekly schedule; and, if they gain weight, they owe a buck for every pound gained. All of the money goes into the prize pot. Sheriff Gabe Morgan was so supportive of the idea that he nearly matched the fund. Approximately \$1,500 will be shared between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers. The winners will be calculated by the largest percentage of body weight lost.

Contestants are shedding weight every way they can, including stripping down to their skivvies. Deputy Rodney Bullock came into the weigh in with shorts under his long pants. He peeled off his shoes, belt, shirt and then slacks. Some of the women are undressing down to their brassieres—behind closed doors, of course. This is serious business, but fun. In fact, the first of the "official rules" is "HAVE FUN," eat healthy, exercise and drink plenty of water.

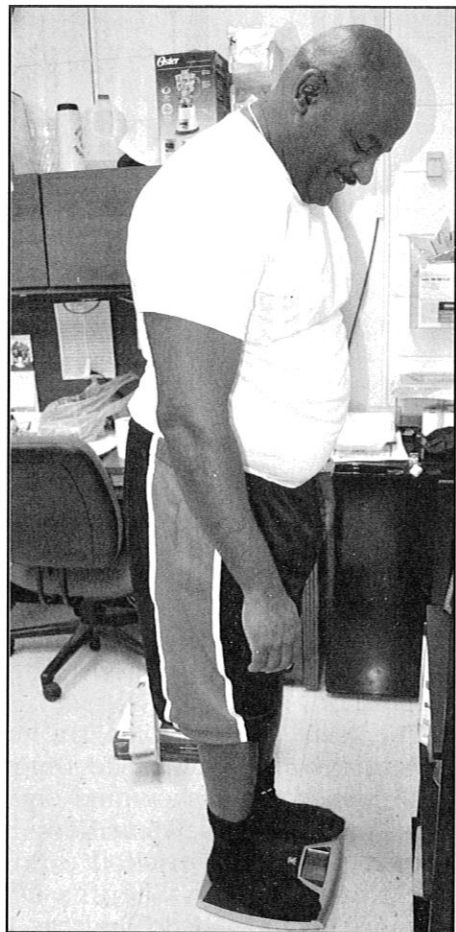
The contest began April 8. The last weigh in was July 29. As of June 17, the total weight loss for the group was 196 pounds.

Robbins is proud of her colleagues for being so dedicated. She described, with a smile, the success of one of the guys. "He had a 9-month belly when he started, and now he has a two."

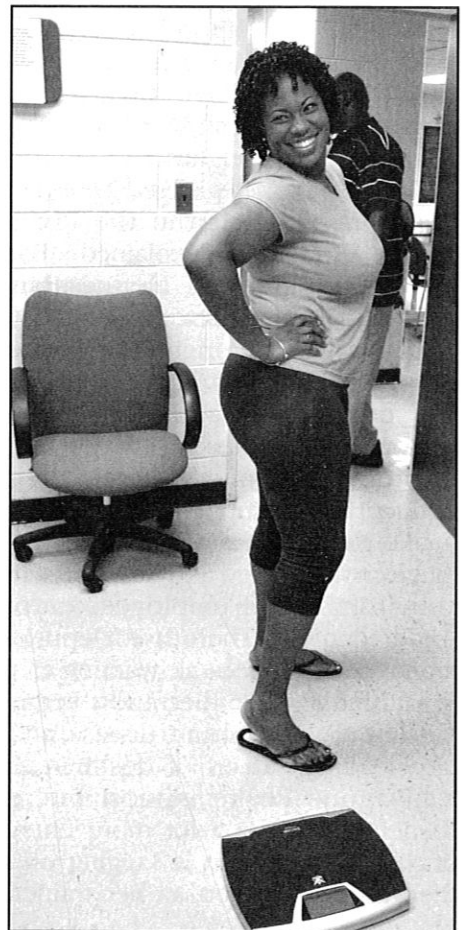
Hicks hopes the Deputies and other participating personnel continue with their healthy lifestyle changes. She says studies have shown the benefits extend beyond the individual. She said, "For every dollar a company invests in employee health and wellness, they get a three dollar return on their investment." The return comes with increased productivity, decreased use of sick days and a reduction in insurance costs.

For those who want a little help reaching their personal weight goals, Riverside Wellness and Fitness Center has a two-month program called "Diet-cise" that combines healthy meals with fat burning exercise. Hicks says they conducted a follow up after a year and discovered that 82% of their clients either maintained the weight loss from the program or had continued to lose more.

"What Sergeant Robbins did to organize this contest showed good leadership and a genuine care and concern for her colleagues," commended Sheriff Gabe Morgan. "I am happy to support the cause and encourage everyone to take care of themselves. Keep up the good work even beyond the final weigh-in date!"



Deputy Rodney Bullock smiles at another drop in weight.



Deputy Chivagzne Peake is happy with how she looks and feels.