RHODE ISLAND CRIMINALISTICS ASSOCIATION
c/o Rhode Island State Crime Lab
048 Fogarty Hall – URI
41 Lower College Road
Kingston, RI 02881
Phone: 401-874-5056

November 13, 2026

TO: **ALL RICA MEMBERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

FROM: **DENNIS C. HILLIARD, TREASURER**

RE: **ANNUAL MEETING OF RICA**

The **ANNUAL Meeting** of the Rhode Island Criminalistics Association will be held on **Tuesday, December 15, 2026. RICA Association officers** will be nominated and voted on at this meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Richard's Pub in East Greenwich. Cocktails at 6:00, appetizers at 6:15 PM, meeting at 6:30 PM and dinner at 6:45 PM. **Cost is $50.00 per member or guest.**

Please call the Laboratory at 874-5056 or email dhilliard@uri.edu with your reservation(s) by COB Thursday, December 10, 2026. We need a minimum of 40 reservations.

You can send a check made out to RICA to: Dennis Hilliard, 41 Lower College Road, 048 Fogarty Hall, Kingston, RI 02881-1966. You can also pay by cash or check at the door. Venmo option: @Dennis-Hilliard-1, put RICA Dinner in the "What's it for?" line and make the transaction private.

Remember to bring some raffle cash with you.

Richard's Pub https://richardspubri.com/, is located at 3347 South County Trail, East Greenwich, RI 02818, 401-884-2880.

MENU

Appetizers: **Mozzarella Sticks and Baked Stuffed Mushrooms**

Entree (Buffet Style): **Yankee Pot Roast, Baked Stuffed Chicken Breast, and Baked Stuffed Flounder**
Tossed Salad, Oven Roasted Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Rolls & Butter, Coffee
***Vegetarian option available upon request**

RICA Annual 2027 dues of $15.00 are due by 1/1/27. Dues can be collected at this meeting.

Please consider donating an unwrapped toy to the Seekonk PD Christmas Toy Drive at this meeting. See the attached Flyer. Tino Natale will deliver all donations to the Seekonk PD. NB: In memory of Lance Corporal Ryan Kennedy, son of Jeanne Natale ('14).

• SERVICE & TRAINING

The September RICA meeting, held at Warren Rod & Gun Club, was attended by forty-two members and guests; everyone enjoyed the food. The RICA has been enjoying the Pare Family Clam Boil each year for more than twenty-five years. Many Special thanks to Chief (Ret.) Robert "Bob" Pare and his crew for all those memorable diners that included steamed clams, quahog stuffing, net bags (white fish, potatoes, sausages, onions), corn on the cob, and watermelon. Special thanks also to Wakefield Liquors and Len Andrews for raffle contributions, and to Jim Clift and Mark Zabinski for assisting with the dinner attendee sign-ins. Only the Treasurer was present for this meeting.

Progress Report for 2026 January – September: There was an 8.1% increase (259 vs. 280) in the number of new cases and a 9.9% increase (1,383 vs. 1,521) in the number of exhibits submitted to the Laboratory from January 1 to September 30, 2026, compared to the same period in 2025. The types of cases which increased this period, compared to the same period last year, include: Arson, ADW, Drug Firearms Violations, Hit & Run, Stolen Property and Suicide. The types of cases which decreased this period, compared to the same period last year, include: Assault, Breaking & Entering, Disorderly Conduct, Homicide, and Larceny.

Laboratory staff made fifteen (15) presentations during this period. Laboratory staff members attended thirty-six (36) training programs, on-line and in-person. There were thirty-one (31) tours of the State Crime Laboratory and sixteen (16) interviews. The Lead Firearms & Toolmark Examiner began working in the Laboratory on January 5th. The Laboratory provided two (2) internships this summer. Staff members participated in an ANAB Accreditation Assessment, and two local Police Department's Evidence Room Audits. Laboratory staff assisted the Maine State Crime Laboratory with a technical case review. Four (4) detectives were trained and certified in NIBIN Triage & Brasstrax Acquisitions. A staff member acted as an ANAB assessor for an external forensic laboratory audit. Two (2) police departments provided the Laboratory with additions to the reference firearms collection. Laboratory staff hosted two (2) Workshop Training Sessions on Latent Print Photography and Fire Scene Photography for Police Officers.

The RI State Crime Laboratory Commission met on October 8, 2026 at the RIAG Cranston Office. At this meeting the Commission heard a presentation on 3D-Virtual Comparison Microscopy (VCM) systems, for firearms analysis, by Jennifer Robisheaux. The Commission requested that RISP Colonel Weaver, a Commission member, work with the RI Public Safety Grant Administrative Office (RIPSGAO) to determine a source of funding for this technology. In October the RIPSGAO asked the Laboratory to apply for full funding for the system through the FY2026 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant. The application was sent to the RIPSGAO in early November. Funding would include the purchase and validation of the 3D-VCM system. The Commission was also notified that the Laboratory had submitted a grant application at the request of the ATF, to purchase an upgraded IBIS/NIBIN workstation. The application is for a new workstation and a five year service agreement.

The 2026-2027 class has thirty-seven (37) registered officers, with thirty-five (35) on the 2027-2028 reserved class list, recognizing the quality and value of this program!

Forensic Science Partnership (FSP) Fall 2026: seminar programs relevant to criminal investigations and forensic science. Seminars are recorded and available for viewing at the FSP website. Of interest to members would be the presentation on October 23rd, titled Cat & Mouse. Presented by Brian Andrews (Ret. RISP-Cat) and Tony Fiore (Ret. Criminal-Mouse). If you are interested in presenting a seminar or have a speaker to recommend, please let me know.

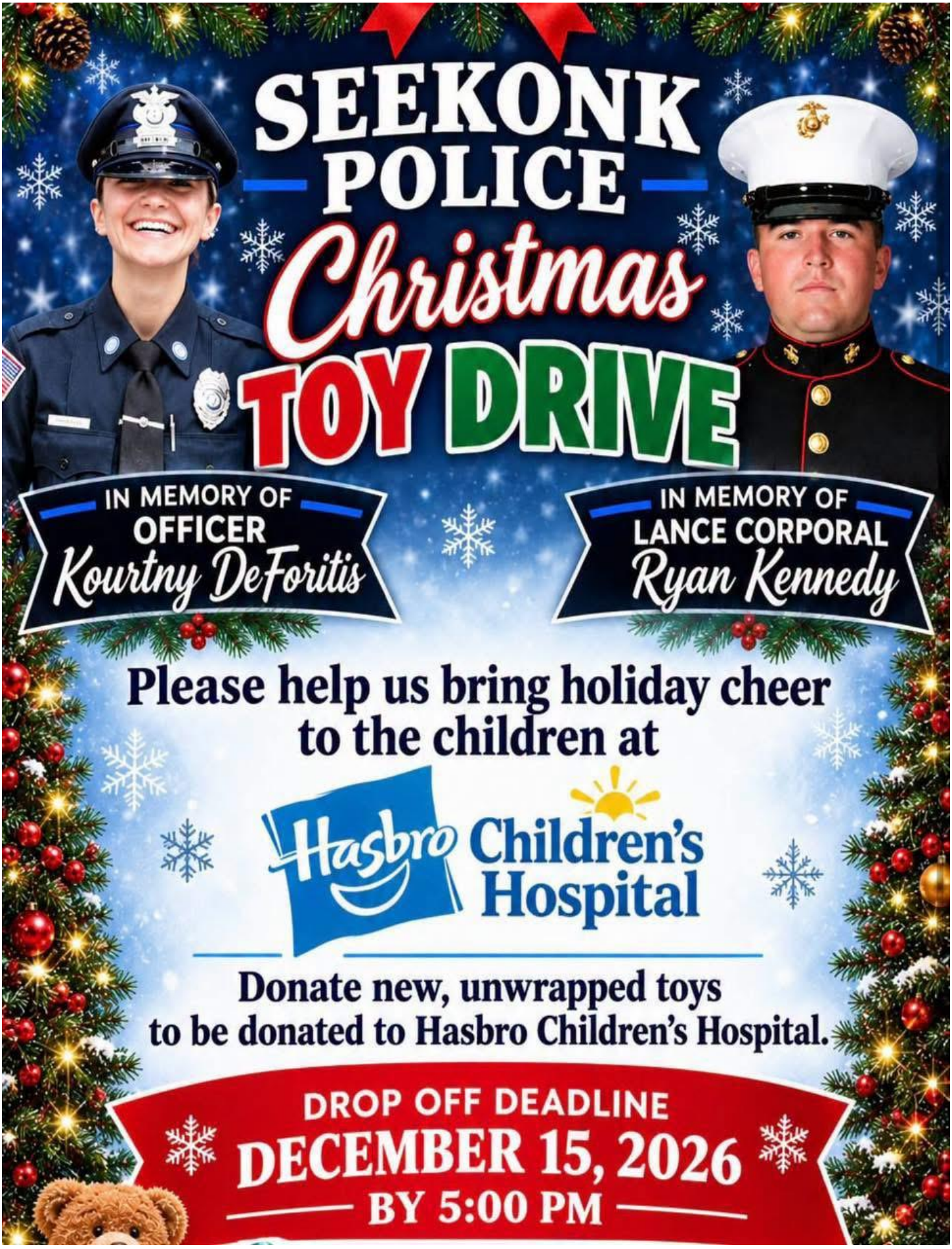
FBI Bank Robbery Note File - a database housed at the FBI Laboratory's Questioned Documents Unit. The Bank Robbery Note File (BRNF) is a computerized database containing images and wording of demand notes used during robberies. Phone: 703-632-8444 or E-mail: bankrobberysearch@fbi.gov.

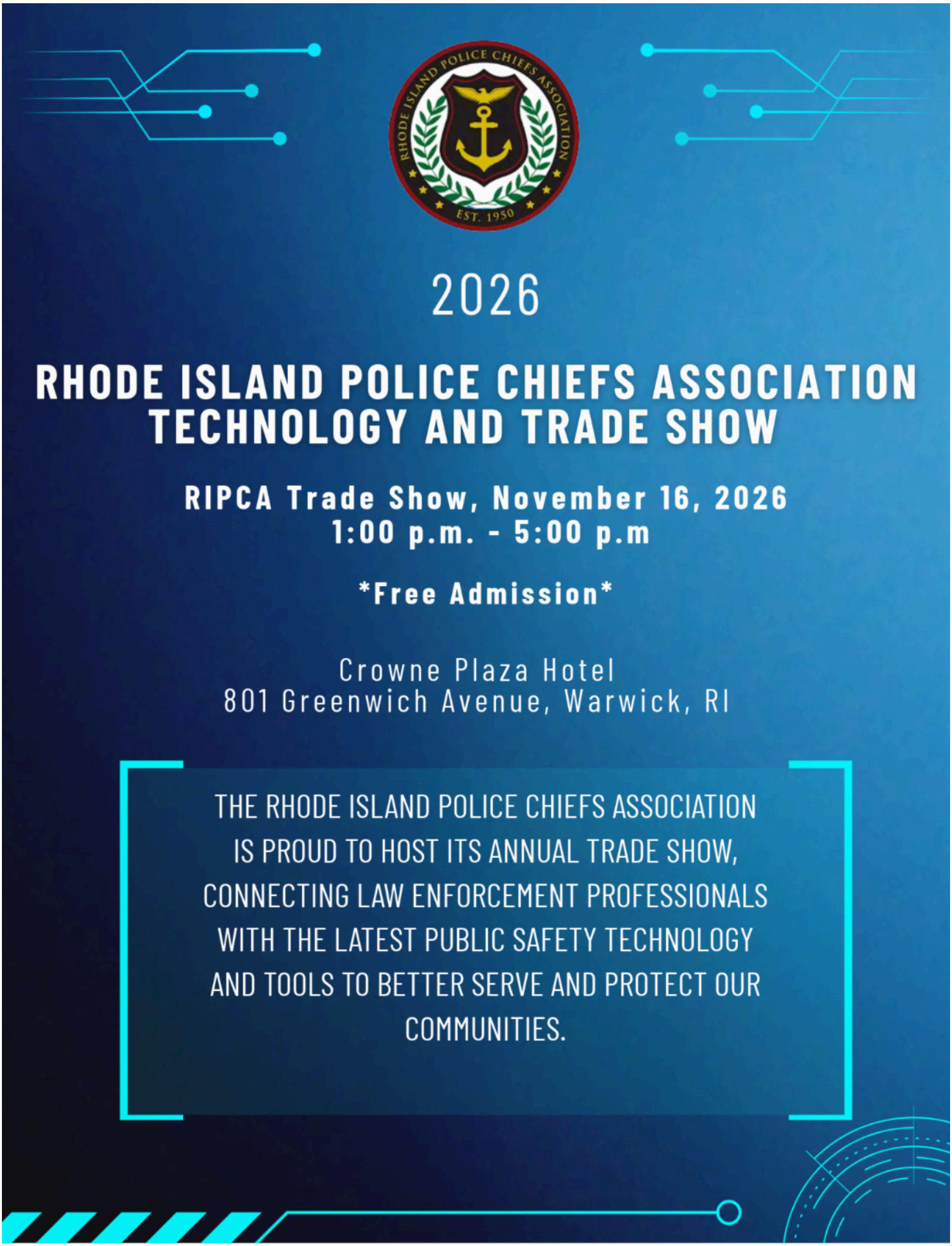
FUNDING

If you meet with your State Representatives and/or Senators, remind them of the work of the State Crime Laboratory and ask them to support the State Crime Laboratory in the annual State budget process. If you have an opportunity to speak with our Federal Senators and Representatives or their staff members, remind them of the importance of federal grant programs, such as the Coverdell and Byrne/JAG grant programs.

PERSONAL

Karen Vallaro, Criminalist II with the RISCL will retire effective December 2, 2026. The RISCL will be advertising for a Criminalist to take on duties associated with Evidence Control and NIBIN entries.
Matt Alves ('19) & Peter Provencal ('13) have retired from Coventry PD. Congrats!
Seekonk PD is sponsoring a Christmas Toy Drive, see attached flyer, in Memory of Lance Corporal Ryan Kennedy, son of Jeanne Natale ('14). Please bring an unwrapped toy to the meeting or drop one off at the Seekonk PD. Thank you!


SEEKONK
POLICE
Christmas
TOY DRIVE
IN MEMORY OF
OFFICER
Kourtny DeForitis
IN MEMORY OF
LANCE CORPORAL
Ryan Kennedy
Please help us bring holiday cheer
to the children at
Hasbro Children's Hospital
Donate new, unwrapped toys
to be donated to Hasbro Children's Hospital.
DROP OFF DEADLINE
DECEMBER 15, 2026
BY 5:00 PM


RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
EST. 1950
2026
RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE SHOW
RIPCA Trade Show, November 16, 2026
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m
Free Admission
Crowne Plaza Hotel
801 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick, RI
THE RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION IS PROUD TO HOST ITS ANNUAL TRADE SHOW, CONNECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS WITH THE LATEST PUBLIC SAFETY TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS TO BETTER SERVE AND PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES.