



## Computer network helps Colo. sheriffs notify crime victims of danger

written by: [Randy Barber](#) ■ 11/9/2009

DENVER - Every sheriff's department across the state is joining a system that quickly updates crime victims and their families if a defendant or a convict is released, transferred or escapes from jail.

The VINE system is a multi-state computer program created by Kentucky technology company Appriss, which delivers notifications about the custody status of offenders by phone and email 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It has been used by the Denver County Sheriff's office for 13 years, but on Monday the County Sheriff's of Colorado announced that every county across the state will now use the system.

"The service really provides timely information for victims, gives them peace of mind because they know what is happening with a defendant," said Denver County Undersheriff and Director of Corrections Bill Lovingier said.

The system, which relies on reporting by each county's correction officers, was created 16 years ago after the murder of Mary Byron. The 21-year-old was killed on her birthday by a man who was released from jail.

"Her ex-boyfriend had raped her several weeks before and was jailed on that charge. She and her family were told that if he got out of jail, they would call them and notify that family. Well, as you can guess, that call never came," an Appriss spokesman said.

"It caused such an outrage in the local community there that the local government decided something had to be done. Almost a year to-the-day later, the first victim notification system called VINE was launched in Louisville Kentucky," he added.

The spokesman says that over the past 16 years, the system has sent out more than 4.5 million notifications.

"It's an anonymous system, so we don't know how an individual deals with a particular situation, but we have had some that have contacted us over the years to let us know, if it wasn't for the VINE system, they don't believe they would be here today," the spokesman said.

Anyone can register for VINE notifications. Call 1-888-263-8463 or [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up or for further information.

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