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## New proposals to track sex offenders

Sandra Chapman/Eyewitness News

Indianapolis, February 13, 2006 - The State of Indiana increased its effort to keep track of sex offenders Monday. A new state web site is designed to let you search areas near your home for registered sex offenders.



But the information isn't perfect.

So authorities are reverting to an old standby - the telephone - for new tracking systems for convicted sex offenders.

Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi offers the Criminal Alert Hotline, where dialing 327-KIDS will reveal information on offenders in your neighborhood, and give you a place to report those who fail to register.

"This is not to promote any sort of vigilante justice," Brizzi explained Monday, "but it is based on a premise that an informed community is a safe community."

Brizzi concedes the whereabouts of 30 percent of sex offenders required to register are unknown. Some of the information is disturbingly inaccurate.

"We're filing 16 cases of Marion County residents who have failed to file as a registered sex offender," Brizzi explained.

Two of those offenders are repeat violators of the law. Jackie Wayne Hatfield served ten years for rape and George A. Miller served 11-years for child molestation.

Democrat candidate for prosecutor Melina Kennedy says it's time the county enact more stringent bans on sex offenders.

"Like some other cities, we enact a law that prohibits sex offenders from being in places like parks, playgrounds and pools," she suggested Monday.

Kennedy said partnerships with law enforcement would help, but right now they are taking political undertones. While Kennedy, a Democrat, backs fellow Democrat Sheriff Frank Anderson's one officer-one offender approach to tracking sex offenders, the Republican Brizzi teams up with GOP Attorney General Steve Carter to provide e-mail notification.

"Anytime there is a change in the database of the sex offender registry," Carter said, "an immediate e-mail notice will go out to those people that have signed up."

The e-mail notification system becomes available April 1.

All of the new initiatives are free to the public. But a word of caution: State and county officials acknowledge there are few concrete ways to track convicted sex offenders aside from GPS monitors and lifetime probation. Those are issues for the Indiana General Assembly.



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