

August 23, 2011

Colorado VINE® Users' Conference opens in Montrose County
Victims' advocates/ law enforcement to meet on victim notification services

Victim advocates and law enforcement personnel will converge on the Montrose County Sheriff's Office this week to learn more about Colorado VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday.) VINE is an automated service that keeps crime victims and their families informed on the custody status of an offender. Users can check the status and receive notifications of an offender's status change by telephone or email.

"This is the first statewide VINE conference since the program was launched in Colorado in 2008," said Sheriff Rick Dunlap. "Advocates and law enforcement officials will hear from a number of speakers and discuss ways to get the word to every citizen in our state about this life saving system."

The session will take place at Sheriff Dunlap's office, 1200 N. Grand Avenue on Tuesday, August 23 from 9:45 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. Among those scheduled to speak are Sharon Schwabe, the Colorado VINE project manager, Dan Griffin, training coordinator with the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA,) and Bob Bales and Erica Cecil, learning specialist and account manager with Appriss, the technology provider of the VINE service.

"Over the last four and a half years, there have been more than 56,000 VINE registrations across the state," said Schwabe. "More than 976,000 outbound notification calls have been made to registrants and more than 18,000 emails have been sent."

VINE was created in 1994 following the murder of Mary Byron in Louisville, Kentucky. She was raped by a former boyfriend who was later released from jail without her knowledge. He shot Mary to death on her 21st birthday.

Denver was one of the first cities in the nation to begin using the service. The County Sheriffs of Colorado took VINE statewide in 2008, making Colorado the 36th state to launch it. VINE is currently available across most of the nation as well as Puerto Rico. It is available in both English and Spanish.

A second users' conference is planned in Pueblo County on September 7.

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