

## Online search and notification program expands to Petersburg Jail

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PETERSBURG - Seniors and other local residents have another resource to protect themselves from crime with the introduction locally of a program that lets victims know when convicted offenders are getting out of jail.

At the fifth annual Christmas celebration of the Triad anti-crime program on Monday at Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Petersburg Sheriff Vanessa R. Crawford announced that the city jail has joined the Victim Information and Notification Everyday, or VINE, program. The program “is rolling out at the Petersburg Sheriff’s Office today,” she said.

VINE allows citizens to search for information about prisoners being held in state, local or regional correctional facilities throughout Virginia to get information about the prisoner’s custody status. In addition, users can sign up to receive notifications of the offender’s release, transfer or escape.

Citizens can elect to receive notifications by phone or e-mail. To search for offenders or register for notifications, visit <https://www.vinelink.com/vinelink/initSearchForm.do?siteId=47000>. You can also register for notifications toll-free at 800-467-4943.

VINE was created and is operated by a Kentucky-based company, Appriss Inc., under contract with the state and the Virginia Sheriffs Association.

Virginia joined the VINE program in 1999. It provided information only on offenders held in state prisons until August 2006, when then-Gov. Timothy M. Kaine announced that it would be expanded gradually over the ensuing 2½ years to include all local and regional jails in the state.

The expansion made Virginia the 23rd state to adopt the program statewide. Currently, all but four U.S. states participate in the VINE system. Locally, Dinwiddie County, Riverside Regional Jail and Piedmont Regional Jail are also part of the program.

Crime victims in Virginia also can register to be notified if an appeal or habeas corpus proceeding is filed in a case that concerns them. Those notifications are available from the state Attorney General’s Office Victim Notification Program. To register, visit [http://www.oag.state.va.us/KEY\\_ISSUES/VICTIM\\_NOTIFICATION/index.html](http://www.oag.state.va.us/KEY_ISSUES/VICTIM_NOTIFICATION/index.html), e-mail [victim@oag.state.va.us](mailto:victim@oag.state.va.us) or call 800-370-0459.

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