

Thanks to swift response by the Appanoose County Sheriff, **Appanoose County has come online with IowaVINE.** I want to make you aware of the program, how it has unfolded in Appanoose County and across Iowa, and how it will work for crime victims.

The Story Behind VINE

VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) was created and implemented in Kentucky by Appriss, Inc., a company that develops law enforcement and victim rights software.

VINE was created about twelve years ago after a woman named Mary Byron was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend. The man had been incarcerated for sexually assaulting Mary. The sheriff assured Mary that she would be told if the offender left the jail. The offender posted bail, laid in wait at Mary's work and when she was walking to her car, he pulled out a gun and shot her six times. Mary had not been notified that her offender had been released from custody.

VINE is now available in 42 states. At least 24 of the states have Vine available to victims statewide. In addition, the Federal Prison System has VINE available to victims nationwide. The Iowa Attorney General's Crime Victim Assistance Division is developing and implementing a statewide victim information and notification system named IowaVINE.

IowaVINE Essential Information

Appanoose County is now "live" with IowaVINE.

Background

In 2006, the Iowa Attorney General's Office received a \$1.2 million grant to establish an effective automated system of tracking criminals and assuring a victim's right to notification about incarcerated offenders. Appriss, the providers of the VINE service, has contracted to provide an Iowa statewide program similar to that provided in 23 other states across the country.

The Iowa statewide information and notification system is called IowaVINE. The IowaVINE system will be implemented over the next 14 months in all 99 Iowa counties as well as the Department of Corrections.

The IowaVINE system will empower victims by allowing them to either call in or to check a website for offender-status information at anytime and from anywhere. The victim and other interested parties will also be able to register for immediate notification regarding any change of status of the offender while incarcerated in Iowa. Criminal justice agencies will be better assured that victims are notified as required by Iowa Code for their safety and peace of mind.

How IowaVINE Works

IowaVINE is a voluntary service where crime victims can get information and register for notification. Victims can go to the website to get information on the status and location of an offender. A victim may also register for automated telephone or e-mail notification of a change in the offender's status or location. However, some victims may still choose to register only with the criminal justice system for direct written notification as allowed in the Iowa Code.

IowaVINE benefits and empowers victims. Victims can either call or check a website for offender-status information 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, and 365-days a year. They can check that information anytime from anywhere. A victim can also register for immediate notification of change in the status of an offender incarcerated either in jail or in the Department of Corrections.

IowaVINE is an anonymous and cost-free method for a victim to receive information, notification, and peace of mind regarding an offender who harmed them and who they may fear. IowaVINE also provides cost-free operator assistance 24-hours a day to ensure that a victim has all of the help they need to get the information that they want.

Victims will access IowaVINE through a toll free number, 1-888-7-IAVINE (888-742-8463), or through a website, www.vinelink.com.