

Smith Alling Lane organizes impressive press event to promote client's new Statewide Victim Notification System.

October, 2006

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) and Appriss, Inc of Louisville, Kentucky partnered to develop a statewide automated victim notification system (VINE). Smith Alling Lane designed the enabling legislation and advocated for passage of the legislation and legislative budget funding.

Smith Alling Lane used its public relations experience to design and organize an impressive press event to launch the new system. Listed below are a few media links regarding the event, and the press release prepared by Smith Alling Lane:

<http://www.komotv.com/stories/45882.htm>

<http://www.kirotv.com/video/10038833/index.html>

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/288124_crime10.html

<http://www.spokesmanreview.com/local/story.asp?ID=153789>

News Release

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For Immediate Release

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**The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Launches
Statewide Victim Notification System**

Starting today, crime victims throughout the state can be electronically notified when their offenders are transferred or released from jail or prison

Renton, WA. – The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) kicked off Domestic Violence Awareness Month today by announcing the implementation of a statewide victim information and notification service. The service allows crime victims to obtain timely and reliable information about an offender's custody status 24 hours a day over the telephone, through the Internet, or by e-mail. Users can inquire about the current status and register to be notified immediately upon an offender's release, escape, or transfer.

Beginning at 11:00 a.m. today, victims will be able to begin using the system statewide. Until now, the service was limited to King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

“This marks the 20th annual commemoration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We believe it is long past time to eliminate a horrible crime that traumatizes families, endangers children, and threatens communities,” said Donald G. Pierce, WASPC executive director. “This is a time for law enforcement, victim services and community leaders to work together to raise public awareness of this growing epidemic.”

Pierce added that while domestic violence survivors will experience a significant benefit from this service, it is available to any victim, regardless of the crime. He also credited Senators Pam Roach (R-Auburn) and Margarita Prentice (D-Renton) with pursuing and securing the necessary legislation and state funding for the project. Finally, he thanked the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance for providing additional federal funding. “Without the federal funding, this project would not have been possible,” Pierce said.

Sen. Roach prime sponsored the statewide victim notification legislation during the 2006 legislative session (Senate Bill 6502). Sen. Prentice placed the text of this legislation and the necessary state funding into the state budget legislation (Senate Bill 6386 section 216 (6)), which progressed to successfully pass the entire Legislature. With the passage of the legislation, Washington became the 21st state to implement a statewide victim notification system.

“Like many of my colleagues, I believe crime victims should not have to be victimized again by being kept uninformed about their offender,” said Sen. Roach. “Automated victim notification has saved lives across this country and we want the citizens of our state to have the resources to protect themselves and the ones they love.”

“I am proud to have been part of the legislative effort to bring a statewide victim notification system to the State of Washington. This is an essential system that is necessary to protect our crime victims and give them the peace of mind they deserve,” said Sen. Prentice. “This system is an extremely important use of our state's limited financial resources.”

The state's leading victim associations, including, the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates and the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs applauds the state for providing the necessary funding to expand the service statewide.

“There were more than 53,000 reports of domestic violence in Washington last year; victims reported 13,754 violations of domestic violence protection orders. Keeping victims safe and holding perpetrators accountable requires multiple systems-based strategies, said Nan Stoops, WSCADV executive director. “Survivors should not have to live in fear once their abusers are behind bars,” The automated victim notification service can help survivors plan for their safety by giving them the information they need to protect themselves.”

The Statewide Victim Notification System is extremely easy to use. Users register by simply calling 1-877-846-3492 (toll free), or go on line at www.vinelink.com. In addition to English, the service will also be available in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese.

About WASPC

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs consists of executive and top management personnel from law enforcement agencies statewide including sheriffs, police chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Department of Corrections, and representatives of a number of federal agencies. It is the only association of its kind in the nation serving all law enforcement agencies in the state.

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About WSCADV

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a non-profit, statewide network of over 60 domestic violence victim advocacy programs across the state. Founded by survivors of domestic violence and their allies, the coalition gives a voice to battered women's programs, promotes community accountability, and works to end violence against women.

The coalition's work includes public policy advocacy, training and technical assistance to advocates and other systems, research, producing educational tools, and promoting domestic violence awareness.

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About WCCVA

The Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates is a group of individuals, agencies, and organizations working together to improve services for victims of crime and strengthen victims' rights in Washington state.

The coalition offers services to individuals and organizations advocating on behalf of crime victims including; technical assistance, training, education and networking opportunities.

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About WCSAP

The Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs is a membership agency comprised of individuals and organizations dedicated to ending sexual assault in their communities. Its mission is to unite agencies engaged in the elimination of sexual violence through education, advocacy, victim services, and social change.

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About Appriss

Since 1994, Appriss has provided innovative technology solutions that help hundreds of local, state, and Federal government agencies serve and protect citizens. Their flagship product, VINE®, the National Victim Notification Network, serves more than 1,600 communities in 41 states. In addition to VINE, Appriss provides automated notification services to victims of Federal Crime through the U.S. Department of Justice.

Other innovative products offered by Appriss include JusticeXchange™, the nation's leading solution for connecting criminal justice agencies; VINE Protective Order™, which alerts individuals when a protective order has been served; AlertXpress™, a high speed notification service for government agencies; and MethCheck™, an automated tool that allows law enforcement to monitor the purchase of pseudoephedrine- a key ingredient in the production of methamphetamine.

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