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New System Is a Life VINE

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An innovative service providing crime victims, victim advocates and other concerned citizens with free and confidential notification is now available to Giles County residents.

“Fast access to custody information on offenders throughout Tennessee, known as VINE/SAVIN, is another avenue for protecting the citizens of Giles County,” Sheriff Kyle Helton said. “The automated service allows citizens 24-hours-a-day access either by telephone or the Internet on offenders in our county and throughout the state.”

Tennessee SAVIN provides an added level of protection because it gives everyone access to timely accurate information on any particular county inmate’s release, transfer or escape from participating agencies over the phone, through the Internet or by e-mail.

“We’re delighted that we could make this important service available to the public for their safety, which is always our highest priority,” Helton said. “Victims have the right to know.”

What Is VINE/SAVIN?

The acronym stands for Victim Information and Notification Everyday/Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification.

Although it may sound complicated, the automated system is user friendly.

“People who call the Tennessee VINE number, 1-888-868-4631, are asked to provide an offenders’s name or booking number,” Helton explained. “The system provides the relevant custody information, and then it asks the caller if they would like to register to be automatically notified when the offender is released or transferred.”

To register, one must only provide a phone number and a four-digit personal identification number (PIN), which they will later use to confirm the notification call.

Live operator assistance is available around the clock for callers who have questions or require additional help. Citizens can also go online at www.vinelink.com to locate and register.

“Tennessee VINE/SAVIN is definitely designed with the victim in mind,” Helton said. “What makes it special is the automatic notification feature — as long as you’ve got a telephone or access to the Internet, you can receive an automated alert anytime of the day or night. That kind of protection is critically important to anyone who’s concerned about the whereabouts of an offender.”

Since 2005, the SAVIN grant program has nearly doubled the number of states providing automated victim notification, furthering its goal to increase public safety and improve basic criminal justice decisions.

“This is done by ensuring that victims are given timely and accurate information that enhances their ability to protect themselves, and ensures they are able to fully participate in the criminal justice process,” Helton added.

VINE/SAVIN is being offered to all Tennessee counties. A large number of the state’s counties are operational and all are in various stages of implementation.

VINE/SAVIN is a nationwide service used in more than 40 states, including some of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas, such as New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, supports law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, victim services, technology and prevention initiatives that strengthen the nation’s criminal justice system. BJA provides leadership, services and funding to America’s communities by emphasizing local control, building relationships in the field, developing collaborations and partnerships, promoting capacity building through planning, streamlining the administration of grants, increasing training and technical assistance, creating accountability of projects, encouraging innovation and ultimately communicating the value of justice efforts to decision-makers at every level.

TN SAVIN is a project of the Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence provided by a grant from the US Department of Justice, BJA.

“Please do not depend only on this program for your protection,” Helton noted. “The program is a great way for victims to keep up with offenders. However, victims should maintain other contacts with their advocate, attorney or law enforcement officers assigned to their case.”