

# The Pueblo Chieftain

## Victim notification system expands

**The federally funded program keeps victims aware of criminals' movements.**

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**CANON CITY** - A new victim notification system will help victims keep tabs on inmates in county jails and eventually state prisons throughout Colorado in the coming months.

The Victim Notification System, or VINE, is a \$930,000 program implemented by a federal grant and will encompass information on inmates at all of the county jails in the state.

"We are going around the state letting people know about the Victim Notification System to prevent anyone being released from jail and surprising the victim because that victim did not know that person is back in the community," said Don Christensen, executive director of County Sheriff's of Colorado organization, which oversees the program.

The program, available to victims, detectives and the public through [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com), will be up and running in Fremont County in 30 to 45 days and in Pueblo County in 60 to 90 days, Christensen said.

The Division of Youth Corrections is online and the Colorado Department of Corrections will follow next year so that VINE can provide information on 40,000 inmates in the state. Most all other Southern Colorado counties are hooked up to or looking into the program.

A computer in each jail will be the record management system and requires no additional work for the using agency.

When an offender is moved or released, or even on escape status, the victim is notified via phone, e-mail or letter. Each victim receives a four-digit PIN number and also can use the Web page to keep track of an offender on their own, said Rick Jones of Appriss, the company that maintains the software.

In Colorado alone, VINE accounted for 420,000 phone calls during the past two years and the volume will continue to grow as more jails are added to the database.

The program is free to victims and the public. Christensen said to keep it running, an additional \$385,000 per year will be needed, and more private, state and federal funding is being sought.

For additional information or to register, visit online.