



Governor Beshear launches “Public Safety First” initiative

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News release

Key safety technology programs to be enhanced/expanded

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear and Justice Cabinet Secretary J. Michael Brown today announced plans to elevate the oversight and fiscal management of several key public safety technology programs under a single umbrella of protection known as “Public Safety First.” The Kentucky Justice Cabinet will oversee the new initiative which includes the expansion of several existing programs, to be rolled out through the first quarter of 2009.

“The first line of the U.S. Constitution provides that two of the most basic roles of our government are to establish justice and ensure domestic tranquility,” said Gov. Beshear. “When times are difficult, our government cannot turn away from the most basic role of protecting the public.”

The initial components of “Public Safety First” include:

Improved services offered to crime victims. The statewide victim notification program (VINE®) will be expanded to include protective order and court hearing notifications. By integrating these new capabilities, victims will access the new services through a single number and website.

Improved management of sex offenders. This will include an enhanced website for displaying sex offender locations on a map and the inclusion of e-mail alerts on the public notification service. Law enforcement will be automatically notified when a registered Kentucky sex offender is located in a state or local jail. Sex offenders will also receive automated reminder calls when they are required to register their status.

Improved tracking of former inmates. The Justice Cabinet and Department of Corrections will be automatically notified if former inmates are re-arrested and booked into county jails.

Expansion of justice information to state investigators. The state’s JusticeXchange program is being expanded to allow law enforcement, child support, and other state investigative agencies to have access to a nationwide offender database of who is moving in and out of jail.

Coordinating technology to fight meth labs statewide. The state will be extending MethCheck, the statewide program that electronically alerts pharmacies in real time when individuals attempt to violate state and federal laws regarding the sale of psuedoephedrine, or PSE. In the first 90 days of operation, MethCheck recorded 261,251 transactions; 4412 of those were blocked. Most of those blocks were individuals attempting to make multiple purchases in the same day. In the first 120 days of operation, meth lab responses have decreased 30% over the same period a year ago.

“By facilitating the management of these key technology programs at the cabinet level, we are going to be more effective at using these services to their fullest potential,” Brown said. “At the same time, we will drive cost savings for the Commonwealth.”

The governor’s announcement comes as the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) prepares to open its 34th North American Victim Assistance Conference in Louisville.