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Statewide Victim Notification System to Include State Prisons, Court Appearance Info

HARRISBURG – Later this year, victims of crime will be able to receive additional notifications regarding offenders in state prison and court appearances for offenders through the PA SAVIN system, according to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, or PCCD.

PA SAVIN is a free, confidential and automated service that helps victims of crime, their family members, or any concerned citizen to track the custody status of an offender. It currently covers only inmates housed in certain county jails. Currently, 58 of 63 counties with jails have implemented PA SAVIN, with Bedford County scheduled to join on July 1.

“These notification extensions will give victims of crime further rights, regardless of where the offender is located,” said PCCD Chairman Walter M. Phillips Jr. “These updates will allow ensure that crime victims, law enforcement and victim service providers are given vital and timely information of court appearances of offenders in a standardized, consistent manner statewide.”

The second phase of implementation will provide information on the custody status of state prison inmates. PCCD, along with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the state Office of Victim Advocate, are currently working with Appriss, Inc., the Kentucky-based technology company that launched the first victim notification service in the U.S., to integrate state prison data into PA SAVIN.

The third phase will provide court notifications, including court hearings, case disposition and sentencing. PCCD is working with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts and the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Institute in this effort. The second and third phases should be completed by December 2009.

PA SAVIN is a joint project of PCCD and District Attorneys Institute. Pennsylvania was one of 13 states to receive funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance within the U.S. Department of Justice to launch the statewide program.

As the state’s leading criminal justice planning agency, PCCD works to prevent and reduce crime in Pennsylvania and respond to the needs of victims. PCCD

collaborates with the Governor's office, state and local elected officials, victim service agencies, juvenile and criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations and others to achieve those goals.