

## **Victim notification program expands in Wisconsin**

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April 29, 2009

A third Wisconsin county on Wednesday joined what state officials hope will become a statewide crime victim notification service, a system that Dane County has had for about 10 years.

The Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) service currently operates statewide in 37 states and in parts of nine others, including Wisconsin. It allows crime victims to sign up for automated notification by phone or e-mail, telling them when particular individuals are being moved within the correctional system or are released from custody.

"I think our experience in Dane County has been a positive experience for the most part," said Suzanne Beaudoin, the victim-witness coordinator for the Dane County district attorney's office. "It's been a good service for victims and their families."

Beaudoin said her office and police agencies provide information on using VINE to crime victims, who can decide on their own whether to register for notification. In Dane County, victim notifications can be given in English, Spanish or Hmong.

State Department of Corrections spokesman John Dipko said the DOC hopes to have a statewide system running by fall of 2010. If possible, Dipko said, all 72 counties will take part in the system, though he said there's no mandate that they do.

On Wednesday, Marinette County joined Dane and Outagamie counties in participating in VINE. Another 18 counties will activate VINE service in their jails in the coming months, including Ashland, Buffalo, Chippewa, Door, Douglas, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Monroe, Ozaukee, Pierce, Rock, Shawano, Taylor, Trempealeau, Waukesha, Waupaca and Winnebago.

Using VINE, anyone can be notified of a change in a jail inmate's status by telephone, e-mail or both by signing up by phone or through VINE's Web site.

DOC prisons are also on the VINE system, but to be notified of changes in the status of prison inmates, victims must enroll separately through the department's Office of Victim Services and Programs, Dipko said.

The DOC is overseeing the creation of the statewide VINE system as part of a \$1.2 million grant awarded by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, part of the federal Department of Justice.

VINE was founded in 1994 in Louisville, Ky., in response to the murder of a woman by her former boyfriend a year earlier.

To sign up

On the Web: [www.vinelink.com](http://www.vinelink.com)

To register by telephone in Dane County, call 877-418-8463.