

Joe Schmidt

Commissioner

P.O. Box 112000

Juneau, AK 99811-2000

www.corrections.state.ak.us



Richard Schmitz

Special Assistant

907.465.4640

cell: 907.209 5245

richard.schmitz@alaska.gov

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 09-103

May 29, 2009

ALASKA MARKS 10 YEARS OF VINE: AUTOMATED SERVICE NOTIFIES VICTIMS OF PRISON RELEASE, OTHER CRITICAL INFORMATION

ANCHORAGE – The Alaska Department of Corrections will commemorate the 10th anniversary of its automated victim notification service, VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) at a media availability Friday, May 29, at 11 am in Anchorage at the Governor's Office on the 17th floor of the Atwood Building.

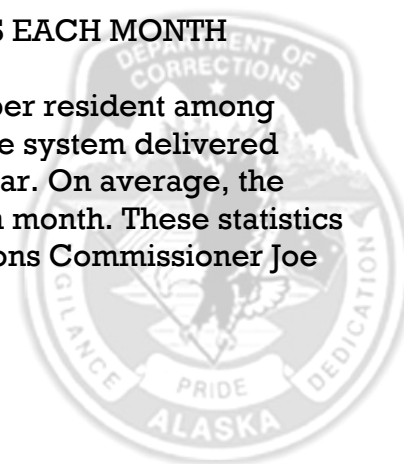
Launched statewide in 1999, VINE provides around-the-clock custody status information about offenders in the department's custody. The service is free, anonymous and open to the public.

Crime victims and other concerned citizens can call 800 247 9763 or log on to www.vinelink.com, enter the offender's name or identification number, and receive up-to-date information on that offender's custody status. They can also register to be notified by phone or email in the event of an offender's release, escape, death or change in custody. In addition, VINE provides notification 30 days prior to an offender's release.

Service representatives are available 24 hours a day to assist callers with registration, locating an offender, or accessing local victim services. Callers can interface with the system in English, Russian, Spanish and Central Yup'ik.

IN ALASKA THERE ARE 400 NEW VINE REGISTRATIONS EACH MONTH

Alaska VINE has the second-highest average contact per resident among states with automated victim notification programs. The system delivered more than 10,000 phone and email notifications last year. On average, the service receives more than 400 new registrations each month. These statistics prove VINE is a widely-used safety tool, said Corrections Commissioner Joe Schmidt.



“VINE is a critical service for victims who have an offender in custody. Knowing the offender’s whereabouts gives a victim peace of mind and the sense of empowerment they may have lost in the aftermath of a crime,” Schmidt said.

To continue to raise awareness about VINE, the department is marking the 10th anniversary with the release of three new public service announcements (PSAs) to be distributed across the state.

The PSAs feature Schmidt, crime victim and VINE user Cindy Cashen of Juneau, and the first-ever PSA in the Yup’ik language, which features Barbara Liu of Bethel, who also provided the translation.

“Alaska was one of the first states in the nation to adopt VINE,” Schmidt said. “It’s remains important to continually remind Alaskans about this vital safety tool and reach out to victims who have yet to make VINE part of their safety plan.”

The DOC offers VINE through a partnership with Appriss, a Louisville, KY-based provider of technology solutions for government agencies. More than 2,300 communities in 46 states rely on Appriss for automated victim notification services.

