



From the desk of  
Erie County Sheriff

**Timothy B. Howard**

### National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

The month of October marks the annual commemoration of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

This annual observance provides us with the opportunity to raise public awareness about domestic violence and how we can deal with this tragic crime.

With each tick of the clock, domestic violence has an impact on a life in America.

In the United States alone, an estimated 4.5 million physical assaults and more than 300,000 sexual assaults are committed each year against women by intimate partners.

During National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we encourage communities to work together to stop this epidemic of violence now before the chain is forced into the next generation. During National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we encourage communities to work together to stop this epidemic of violence now before the chain is forged into the next generation.

I'd like to use this opportunity to encourage crime victims who want to know the status of their imprisoned perpetrators to use the VINE (Victim Information Notification System Everyday). It is very easy and easily accessible.

Many victims live in fear that the criminal offender who victimized them may someday return to do so again.

For these victims and their families and friends, it is important to know if that offender is incarcerated in a correctional facility - and to know if and when that offender is released from custody.

It has often been difficult for a victim to obtain timely and accurate information about an offender's custody status - information so important to the victim's peace of mind.

That is why the Sheriffs across the State of New York are pleased to implement the Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE.

Now with just one toll-free phone call, a citizen can immediately learn the custody status of any offender housed in any of New York's county jails or other county correctional facilities.

In addition to providing custody status information to callers, the Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE also has an automatic notification feature. Any victim may register with the Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE to be automatically notified if an offender's custody status should change.

This feature eliminates the need for a victim to constantly call the Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE

to verify the offender's status.

#### What will the New York Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE do for me?

The New York Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE will tell you if an offender is in jail or prison in the State of New York and will give you other important custody information.

The VICTIM HOTLINE will also let you leave a phone number where you want to be notified when that offender is released, transferred, or escapes.

#### What do I need to do?

Call 1-888-846-3469 from a touch-tone phone and follow the directions. The VICTIM HOTLINE will tell you the custody status of the offender.

If the offender is in custody, you can leave a phone number where you want to be notified when there is a change in the offender's custody status. Enter the area code and phone number, followed by the pound (#) key.

When the VICTIM HOTLINE asks, make up and enter a four-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) code that will be easy for you to remember.

The New York Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE will ask for the PIN code when it calls you.

When the New York Sheriffs' VICTIM HOTLINE calls, listen to the message, then enter your PIN when asked. Entering the PIN lets the VICTIM HOTLINE know that you got the call.