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Contact: Jennifer Recktenwald
Appriss Inc.
jrecktenwald@appriss.com
(502) 815-3877

Sex offender awareness is critical during Halloween season
Solutions offered by Appriss, Watch Systems help keep communities safe

Louisville, Ky. — With Halloween season underway, children across the nation will be attending parties, visiting haunted houses staged by community groups, and trick-or-treating in their neighborhoods.

Halloween is an ideal time to educate families about protecting children from potentially dangerous sexual predators by using the sex offender notification and registration services available through Appriss and Watch Systems.

Together, Appriss and Watch Systems offer the industry standard OffenderWatch® management and notification tool, which provides a comprehensive suite of services such as maps and e-mail alerts designed to help parents and caregivers track the whereabouts of sex offenders who live nearby.

Child advocacy and safety experts stress heightened sex offender awareness during Halloween season. The Notification is Prevention Foundation — a national non-for-profit organization that works to increase public awareness of registered sex offenders through education, community awareness, and increased government interaction — offers these Halloween safety tips:

- Be aware of offenders in your area. Check your state's online registry and, if available, sign up to receive alerts when offenders move into your area.
- Children should trick-or-treat in groups, accompanied by a trusted adult.
- Only allow children to trick-or-treat at houses that are well lit.
- Never let kids enter homes without a parent's or caregiver's permission.

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“Halloween is a fun and exciting time for children and we as parents like to think that everyone else’s homes and neighborhoods are just like our own. Unfortunately, that’s just not reality,” said Alicia T. Irmischer, Executive Director of the Notification is Prevention Foundation. “Parents need to review the neighborhoods they plan to trick-or-treat in before Halloween. By being proactive and knowing which houses to avoid, then discussing the potential dangers with your children, parents can help prevent victimization.”

The tools offered by Appriss and Watch Systems to address sex offender monitoring can give communities the education and awareness to support safety measures from these offenders. Users can log on to a community Web portal to search for specific offenders, register to be notified when an offender moves into the area, and use a mapping tool to view offenders residing within a specified distance of a given address. Currently, more than 11 states — including Florida, Utah, and Washington — are relying on Appriss, Watch Systems, and OffenderWatch program for their sex offender monitoring needs.

“Our services are critical for parents, caregivers, and others with a vested interest in child safety,” said Lisa Dohoney, product director at Appriss. “This technology provides accurate, convenient access to information that can protect children. That’s important all year, but especially during a time like Halloween.”

About Appriss

Appriss provides innovative technology solutions that help thousands of local, state, and Federal government agencies serve and protect their citizens. Its flagship product, VINE®, keeps crime victims informed on the custody or court status of their offender in more than 2,000 communities across the country. Other innovative services include VINE Protective Order® which alerts individuals when a protective order has been served; JusticeXchange®, the leading solution for connecting criminal justice agencies nationwide; and MethCheck®, which works with both law enforcement and pharmacies to address the illegal meth lab problem.

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About Watch Systems, LLC

Watch Systems is a leading provider of mapping software and geographic information systems (GIS) for state, county, and city law enforcement agencies in 37 states. Watch Systems offers automated processes with secure access that allow agencies to manage and share data with online communities. The company's core product, OffenderWatch®, has become the industry standard sex offender registration, management, and community notification solution serving more than 600 agencies at both the state and local level.

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