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New program will help victims of domestic violence

By Jillian McGehee
Courier Staff

Saline County is one of three counties in the nation to institute a pilot program that will make notification more efficient for victims of domestic violence when orders of protection are filed.

With the program, the Saline County Sheriff's Department will be able to instantly notify victims by telephone, e-mail or fax, Capt. Jason Massey said. "When (victims) come in, we'll talk to them and get all forms of contact, and that way we can get everything together and know how to reach them," Massey said.

He said a potentially dangerous time for a victim is the 24-hour period immediately after an offender is served with an order of protection. "You never know. They (offenders) can get mad," Massey said.

Currently, victims usually are unaware when the protection orders are served. Massey said the pilot program will help warn the victims so they may act accordingly.

The sheriff's office also is one of the first to use technology called Alert Xpress to notify victims.

The program will alert all Saline County residents, by phone, to emergencies such as a chemical spill or a missing child, Sheriff Phil Mask said. He said deputies are loading all residential and business listings into the emergency phone bank.

"The software is loaded and ready to go once we get all the business listed," Massey said.

With just one touch of a button the whole county will be alerted when emergency strikes, he said.

Phones also will ring when residents need to be warned about a crime spree, Mask said. For example, local businesses will receive a call when someone's forging checks, he said.



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