

## **PA SAVIN, A STATEWIDE APPLICATION TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF CRIME CAN ALSO HELP LAW ENFORCEMENT**

There are so many issues in Pennsylvania that affect law enforcement including legislative and budgetary issues, it is difficult to keep track of everything. That is why we feel that it is important to keep you abreast of tools that can help you perform your duties.

PA SAVIN is an innovative service providing crime victims, criminal justice professionals, and other concerned citizens free, prompt, confidential, and anonymous notifications regarding a county inmate's release, transfer, or escape from a county jail.

Many PCPA members have heard of PA SAVIN but think that it is strictly for victims. Though SAVIN stands for Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification, it is not just for victims! It can be used by law enforcement too.

PA SAVIN can provide valuable information to the law enforcement community. Officers can use PA SAVIN to check the custody status of an inmate and/or register for notification of a custody status change. Law enforcement uses for PA SAVIN include the ability to:

- ❖ Monitor gang activity by determining whether certain offenders are in or out of jail
- ❖ Check on the custody status and location of inmates when the officer is involved in giving testimony or otherwise involved in the trial or prosecution of an offender.
- ❖ Monitor the custody status of inmates in order to serve warrants.
- ❖ Monitor the status of serial offenders in your communities.

PA SAVIN provides users access to timely and reliable information about particular offenders. Individuals can register to be notified 24-hours a day, 365 days per year including any weekends and holidays. Registration is by phone or via the internet. The phone registration can take place either through a prompted system or with the assistance of a live operator, also available 24 hours per day. A registered person will be notified according to the requested method, either by telephone or via e-mail.

PA SAVIN can be a highly effective tool if people know about it. We want to use this opportunity to reach out to law enforcement agencies, who are often the victim's first contact with the criminal justice process, to make sure that victims are also apprised of this system. We know that sometimes offenders can be released within days or even

within hours of an arrest. Registered victims and officers can be notified within 15 minutes of an inmate's release on bond, for example.

A project of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Institute (PDAI) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the implementation of PA SAVIN is paid for through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to create a system that would notify citizens when an offender is released, transferred, or escapes from a county prison.

PA SAVIN is easy to use by anyone. However, the service has safeguards to protect those who could be affected by attempts at its misuse. The safety of those who protect and serve, including police officers, sheriffs and prison guards involved in transporting inmates from prison to other locations, was a rigid requirement for PA SAVIN. Notification of an inmate transfer for any purpose, including medical and psychiatric, is delayed for several hours after the transfer is effected to avoid any possible attempt to free or harm the inmate that could endanger escorting officers. For added safety, PA SAVIN notifications do not provide the location to which an inmate is transported, unless it is a transfer to a new prison.

We have been implementing PA SAVIN, county-by-county since August of 2007. Our goal is to have PA SAVIN up and running in all 63 counties that have county jails by the end of this calendar year. Currently 59 counties (almost 95% of the counties with county jails) are live with SAVIN. Delaware, Lawrence, Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties are currently in the process of coming on-line later this year.

In addition to the county jail notifications, we are also pleased to report that the state's Office of Victim Advocate is also moving toward the PA SAVIN system. Later this year, victims of crime will be able to call the toll-free number and register not only for county jail inmate information, but state inmates and offenders under state parole supervision as well.

PA SAVIN will be a huge boost to public safety in Pennsylvania because it will immediately notify interested residents – including victims of crime and law enforcement officers – when an offender is back in the community. We want to ensure that Pennsylvania residents and public servants are aware of its features.

**To Access PA SAVIN:**

Call **1-866-9PA-SAVIN** or **1-866-972-7284** or go to [www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us](http://www.pacrimevictims.state.pa.us) for information about registration and other services for victims of crime.

For more information about PA SAVIN:

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