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Press Release

SHERIFF DAVID P. Bartlett

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texting Option Added to Crime Victim Notification System

Sheriff David P. Bartlett announces the launch of an enhancement to the New York Sheriffs' Victim Hotline (VINE) that will enable crime victims to receive a text message notification in the event of any change in the custody status of an offender incarcerated in a county correctional facility in New York State or a correctional facility in New York City.

VINE allows crime victims to learn the custody status of an offender, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by telephone or online. This new notification option, "SMS Text Messaging Notification," adds text messaging to the existing notification options. The additional notification method will be in Spanish and English.

Sheriff David P. Bartlett states, "Crime victims need and want timely and accurate offender information to ensure their personal safety and that of their families. With the addition of text messaging, I believe that crime victims will be pleased with this new feature of the VINE program."

In 2014, almost 2.8 million crime victims searched the VINE Database, using either the toll free number (1-888-VINE-4-NY), the VINEMobile app, (both available for iPhone and Android), or the website (VineLink.com). Also in 2014, over 100,000 crime victims received notification of a change in their offender's status either by phone or email. It is anticipated that the addition of the text messaging option will result in even more crime victims receiving timely notification of vital offender information. "I welcome this new feature as my office continues to seek ways to better serve the public safety needs of the citizens of Columbia County," said Sheriff Bartlett.