

New Web Site Powerful Tool To Fight Potential Crimes

Mississippi's men, women and children are safer thanks to the creation of a new on line sex offender registry, and that is good news to every mother, father, man, woman and child in our state. The Sex Offender Registry Web site will aid in crime prevention, which makes Mississippi a safer place to live, work and raise a family.

The intent of this site is to further protect public safety from potential harm imposed by people who have committed sexual offenses in the past. The operation of this sex offender registry arms the families of Mississippi with a powerful tool to fight potential crimes in their neighborhoods and communities.

Our families need to know whether or not a convicted sex offender lives in their neighborhood. The Web site provides information about sex offenders by zip code, city, county or by name. The site includes information listing the crime committed by the individual, the person's current address and the location where the offense occurred. The registry also includes photographs of some sex offenders.

The registry can be reached through the Department of Public Safety's Web site at www.dps.state.ms.us. Anyone with access to the Internet can get this information. If families do not own an Internet-accessible computer, they can use a computer at their local library or they can get information from their local sheriff's office or by requesting the information from the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Information Center.

Fighting crime has gotten harder in many ways over time, but we are making tremendous strides in technology that allow us to track down criminals in ways we never dreamed. The development of this registry is the kind of technology we are talking about. The information this Web site provides could mean the difference in someone's life. Having the information about the presence of a sex offender in a community allows people to take precautions for their own safety, and is a deterrent to repeat offenders.

The creation and maintenance of this Web site is possible because of a cooperative effort between the Mississippi Department of Public Safety and the Sheriff's Departments in each of our 82 counties across the state. The project was funded by a \$263,000 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Correct data collection and upkeep of the site are crucial in this process, so it is important that our agencies on the state and local level work together to keep the site current. Once again, we are proving that we can be more effective for the people we serve by working together with other agencies and organizations.

We are using every available resource to fight crime in our state, and thanks to the leadership of Public Safety Commissioner David Huggins and the men and women of the Mississippi Highway Patrol, we are making great progress.