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DA Web Site Improvements for Crime Victims, Public, Media

(Houston TX) -- The District Attorney's Office has revamped its Internet site to improve the flow of information to citizens and help connect crime victims with prosecutors and cases, District Attorney Kenneth Magidson announced Tuesday.

Upgrades enable news releases to be posted immediately. Journalists and the general public may also sign up online for RSS feeds to instantly receive releases and lists of trials to watch.

Visitors to the site will find a fresh, simplified appearance. It is coupled with a user-friendly navigation design and timely communications about the DA's Office and criminal justice system.

"As a public agency, our priority is to be accountable, responsive and accessible to the citizens we represent," Magidson said. "These site improvements will help us communicate meaningful information in modern, real-time, real-world ways."

Among the innovations is a search engine that expedites the process for crime victims to stay current about their cases and prosecution team.

Complainants enter the cause numbers or offense report numbers provided by the agencies investigating their cases. The site can provide them with the defendant's name, the court handling the case, the next setting time and date, and the telephone number to their prosecution team.

Also in the "Helping Victims" section are extensive summaries and links for assistance available from the District Attorney and other agencies and advocates.

In the "Crime Prevention" section, visitors find similar information and links to sex offender registries, Crime Stoppers and other types of public safety assistance programs.

The www.hctx.net/da site also explains the duties, resources and divisions of the District Attorney's Office. There are answers to common questions that will help in understanding the office and justice system processes and procedures.

Upgrades are part of Magidson's broader public information initiative. He said continuing enhancements will reflect the public's increasing use of new communications technology.

DA's General Counsel Scott Durfee and Information Systems Technology (IST) Director Gary Zallar coordinated the site improvements. They were developed by IST Computer Graphics Specialist Juan De Anda Jr. and IST Programmer Analyst Daren Willman.

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