

2010 CVS Award

Douglas County, Colorado, Sheriff's Office



From Left: Sheriff (ret.) Aaron Kennard (Executive Director, NSA), Sheriff Craig Webre (Lafourche Parish, LA; Chairman, NSA Crime Victim Services Committee), Sheriff David Weaver (Douglas County, CO), Patty Moschner (Victim Assistance Program Coordinator, Douglas County Sheriff's Office), Tom Seigle (Executive Vice President of the Public Safety Division, Appriss, Inc.), and Sheriff John Zaruba (DuPage County, IL; 2009-10 NSA President)

The Crime Victim Services Award was established in 2005 with funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. NSA's Crime Victim Services Committee administers this award program which recognizes "outstanding achievement by a Sheriff's Office in support of victims." Since 2008, the award has been generously sponsored by Appriss, Inc. The award recipient for 2010 is the Douglas County, Colorado, Sheriff's Office.

In 1985, when the Douglas County Sheriff's Office first began its Victim Assistance Program (VAP), services were provided to fewer than 100 victims annually. Since then, the county population has grown over 1000% – making it one of the fastest growing counties in the nation – and, today, under Sheriff David Weaver and VAP Coordinator Patty Moschner, the program serves over 6000 victims and families annually and has 30 volunteers.

All VAP staff have achieved national certification levels for victim advocates and many of the volunteers hold Colorado advocate certifications.

"When emergencies occur...the Douglas County victim advocates arrive first, serve in a leadership role and provide lessons learned for the rest of the field," according to Nancy Lewis, Executive Director of the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance. "This team of advocates has raised the bar for serving crime victims in the state of Colorado."

In 2006, Colorado passed a law mandating that district attorneys and law enforcement officials provide annual trainings on witness protection. But no one took a leadership role in making sure this training was provided; until, that is, the VAP stepped forward and developed a Witness Protection Training Program that is now used throughout Colorado and in other states.

Accordingly, the VAP provides services not only to the citizens of the county, but to the State of Colorado, and the nation as well. Advocates have responded to the victims of Columbine High School; September 11th; the Hayman Fire; and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In summary, to quote Nancy Feldman, Manager, Office for Victims Program, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice: "Without the continual support of the elected Sheriffs of Douglas County, who allowed Ms. Moschner and her staff to assist other agencies, Colorado would not have the outstanding victim services that are currently offered by Sheriffs throughout the state."