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Sheriff's Office Receives Victim Assistance Grant

Sheriff Tom Knight is pleased to announce the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office was awarded a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant from the State of Florida.

The \$78,094 grant provides funding for two additional victim advocates. The Sheriff's Office currently has one advocate who also assists other law enforcement agencies in the county. In the current fiscal year, there were 336 new cases for the Victim Advocate. This staffing level did not allow for adequate follow-up and advocacy for crime victims.

According to the award letter sent by Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum, "This grant is awarded as recognition of your agency's commitment to provide services to crime victims in your community."

Sheriff Knight promised during his campaign that he would work to restore this program, which had been cut in the past. He directed staff to apply for this grant just weeks after taking office.

"This was a priority for me," said Sheriff Knight, "so it is particularly gratifying to expand our ability to be there for victims of violent crime, and to do so with grant funding."

The goal of the Victim Assistance program is to reduce the barriers often faced by crime victims and to offer advocacy and empowering assistance for the successful prosecution of the perpetrator. For more information visit www.SarasotaSheriff.org.