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**NEWS RELEASE**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom Joins in “Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim” for Crime Victims’ Rights Week April 22-28, 2012

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is a time to honor crime victims and our nation’s progress in advancing their rights. This year’s theme - *Extending the Vision: Reaching Every Victim* - calls on us to expand the vision that inspired the victim’s rights movement and celebrate the progress achieved to date. It also captures our hope and common goal of reaching each victim in need of hope and help, one victim at a time.

Since the 1980s, dramatic progress has been made throughout America in securing rights, protections, and services for victims of crime. Every state has enacted victims’ rights laws and has a victim compensation fund. More than 10,000 victim service agencies have been established throughout the country. Yet there is still much to do. There are still challenges to reaching out to all victims. New types of crime, such as identity theft and internet-based crimes, have emerged and proliferated as a result of changes brought about by technology, globalization, and demographics in our society. Meanwhile, long-standing types of victimization endure, demanding a renewed commitment to action.

In Dakota County, the County Attorney’s Office declared its commitment to crime victims in 1977, when it established a Victim/Witness Assistance Program. Since that time, tens of thousands of victims have received non-judgmental support, case specific information, and guidance through the criminal justice system in Dakota County. These services assist victims in recovering from the harm caused by crime and are provided at no cost.

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom commented: “*Serving the needs of crime victims remains a high priority of the Dakota County Attorney’s Office.*”

If you or someone you know has been a victim of crime, help is available. For more information regarding crime victims’ rights and services, contact Kelly Nicholson, Victim Witness Supervisor, Dakota County Attorney’s Office at 651-438-4471, toll free at 1-877-396-6382, or access the Dakota County Attorney’s website at [www.dakotacounty.us/attorney](http://www.dakotacounty.us/attorney).