

Caddo residents benefit from state crime victims program in 2007

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More Caddo Parish crime victims received money from the state Crime Victims Reparations Fund in 2007. Even so, Caddo Parish Sheriff Steve Prator said agencies must work harder to spread the word about the program's benefits.

This past year, 107 local crime victims received benefits. That number was up from 77 victims in 2006. In all, 151 cases were processed in 2007, up from 131 in 2006. The total amount awarded in 2007 was \$328,563, compared to \$269,095 in 2006.

Prator said the Caddo Sheriff's and District Attorney's Offices were co-recipients of a \$5,000 grant in 2007 which was used to purchase billboards and print literature to promote the Crime Victims Reparations Fund and other victims' services.

The fund, which is managed locally by the sheriff, compensates victims of crimes where force or the threat of force was used. Money distributed to the victims is obtained from court costs paid by defendants, supplemented by court-ordered restitution from criminals, a federal grant, donations and interest.

"Victims of crime deserve to be compensated for their losses," Prator said. "It is especially fitting that the money for this program is paid by the people who commit the crimes. I would encourage anyone who qualifies to take advantage of this service."

In Caddo Parish, you can find out more about the Crime Victims Reparations Fund by calling Deputy Pam Dixon at 681-0870.