It's pay back time: crime victims receive reparations from criminals

Wednesday, January 28, 2009
Caddo Parish crime victims received $272,000 in 2008 from a state program that requires criminals to pay into a victims' reparations fund.

Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator said his office processed 162 applications for funds this past year, up slightly from the 151 processed in 2007 and 131 in 2006. Funding was approved in 98 of the 2008 cases with 12 cases still pending.

The Crime Victims Reparations Fund is managed locally by the sheriff and 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.

"More victims are hearing about the program and taking advantage of benefits that are available to them, but they still represent only a small percentage of the number of people who qualify. Crime victims deserve to be compensated, and it's time for the criminals to pay," Prator said.

In 2008, Shreveport/Caddo Parish victims received benefits to help cover things such as lost wages, counseling, and funeral expenses.

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