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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Eric Hoffman, Prosecuting Attorney
Subject: National Stalking Awareness Month
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January 2019 marks the fifteenth National Stalking Awareness Month, an annual call to action to recognize and respond to the serious crime of stalking. It is critical to raise the issue of stalking as its own form of gender-based violence as well as a crime that frequently predicts and co-occurs with physical and sexual assault. Stalking impacts over 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men in the United States -- yet, despite the prevalence and impacts, many victims and criminal justice professionals underestimate its danger and urgency.

Stalking is generally defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear. Many stalking victims experience being followed, approached, monitored and/or threatened – including through various forms of technology.

Victims and survivors often suffer anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression as a result of their victimization, and many lose time from work and/or move. Stalking is a terrifying and psychologically harmful crime in its own right as well as a predictor of potentially lethal violence: in 85% of cases where an intimate partner (i.e., boyfriend or husband) attempted to murder his female partner, stalking preceded the attack. Stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia, but can be difficult to recognize and prosecute in a system designed to respond to singular incidents rather than the series of acts that constitutes stalking.

This year's National Stalking Awareness Month's theme is Stalking: Know It. Name It. Stop It." It is a call to action for everyone in Delaware County and across the country. While police and victim-serving professionals are critical, the reality is that the vast majority of victims tell friends or family about the stalking first. We all have a role to play in identifying stalking, intervening when necessary and supporting victims and survivors. If you are a victim of stalking please contact your local police department as well as the Prosecutor's Office Victim Advocate at 765-747-7801 ext. 871

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