

## A word from the District Attorney



It is the responsibility of the District Attorney's Office to represent the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and victims of crime in the prosecution of criminal and juvenile offenses committed in Lycoming County. Since taking office in 2008, it has been my privilege to fight on behalf of victims, and to ensure the safety of our community. As the County's Chief Law Enforcement Officer, I am committed to work tirelessly to hold offenders accountable, protect the rights of victims, and achieve justice.

A tough and effective District Attorney is our greatest deterrent to crime. In three and 1/2 years, our office has prosecuted nearly eight thousand criminal cases with a 97% conviction rate. Not only have we convicted a large number of offenders, we have fought to obtain tough sentences for these offenders. Frederico Dacenzo, in January 2010, received a sentence of 10 to 20 years following his conviction for possession of child pornography. Jamar Andrews, in February 2009, received a sentence of 25 1/2 years following his conviction on drug and firearm charges. Gregory Barto, in September 2010, received a 35 year sentence for raping several young girls. James Bricker, in February 2011, received a 30 to 60 year sentence for sexually abusing two young boys. Gary Segraves, in July 2011, was sentenced to 71 to 142 years after being convicted of repeatedly raping a young girl over a two year period. Mr. Segraves' sentence was the longest sentence ever obtained in Lycoming County for a defendant who had not been charged with homicide. Sean Durrant, in June 2010, received a 25 to 60 year sentence following his conviction for Third Degree Murder and Conspiracy to Commit Murder. Nineteen year old Javier Cruz, in May 2008, received a sentence of life in prison as a result of his First Degree Murder conviction. And in May 2010, Maurice Patterson was successfully prosecuted in what was the first death penalty conviction in Lycoming County in nearly 20 years.

It is not only important, however, to seek tough sentences, it is also important to ensure that the consequences for criminal behavior come quickly. Cases that are left to linger in the system not only tend to lose their deterrent effect on offenders, but leave victims waiting for justice. It is for this reason that we have worked very hard to see to it that cases are moved quickly through our court system.

Although we have had great success in going after drug dealers, we have also put great emphasis on going after their profits. Since 2008, our office has seized over \$200,000 in drug proceeds. We have been able to use this money to not only invest in our police departments, but also to invest in our community. As District Attorney, I have a responsibility to our County's police agencies to ensure they have all of the equipment, training and resources they require to do their jobs, and to find ways that all of the County's law enforcement agencies can work in even closer partnership to effectively utilize the resources they have.

I believe that as part of our overall crime strategy, we must spend at least as much time preventing crime as we do prosecuting it. That is why I have insisted that my office work closely with our Children and Youth agency to identify families and children in need. That is why I have put great emphasis on our juvenile justice system to intervene with our at risk youth so they are not committing crimes as adults. It is also why I have devoted not only my time, but also the financial resources of this office to invest in our community's children through the support of the work of the Lycoming County Health Improvement Coalition, the DARE program, the Center, the CASA program, CAPP, Camp Cadet, and the Williamsport Youth Football Program, to name a few.

Plans for the future include the creation of a Centralized Booking Center that would allow officers to more quickly get back onto the street while offenders are being processed and arraigned; the implementation of stricter conditions of supervision for sex offenders currently on parole; the expansion of victim services provided by his office; and the creation of a victim compensation fund to reimburse victims of property crimes for their financial loss. Unfortunately, at present, such victims are forced to wait years to be made whole, if they are ever fully compensated at all.

The result of all of this work is evident; crime is down. Since being sworn into office in 2008, crime numbers have decreased county wide every year from their peak in 2006 and 2007, when the County was faced with its highest crime numbers in a decade. In 2010, just three years later, we witnessed the fewest criminal filings in 17 years. It has been a tremendous turnaround. We are headed in the right direction, our work is making a difference, and we are safer because of it.

*District Attorney Eric R. Linhardt*