

ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock
Attorney General



Department of Justice
215 North Sanders
PO Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401

October 26, 2011

Ms. Tori Hunthausen
Legislative Auditor
Capitol
Helena MT 59601

RECEIVED

OCT 27 2011

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIV.

Dear Ms. Hunthausen:

The Legislative Audit Committee requested that I advise you of actions taken by the Department of Justice to improve issues cited in the IT audit of our Sexual and Violent Offender Registry (SVOR). One of the audit findings was that over 1,400 violent and/or sexual offenders were overdue in returning Address Verification Letters (AVLs) which were sent to them by the Department.

State statute requires AVL confirmation by the registrant within 10 days of receipt of the letter (MCA 46-23-504). Technically, many of these offenders are noncompliant by not returning the AVL, although many offenders are either living at the address on record or are incarcerated. In an effort to implement the audit recommendations and better advise local law enforcement (LLE) about an offender's AVL status in a timely fashion, the department has made some recent enhancements to our registry website and has started sending LLE monthly messages citing all offenders that have overdue AVLs.

The website now shows offenders who have not returned their AVLs as "Noncompliant/Address Verification Overdue." Obviously, any changes to an offender's status will be coordinated between LLE and the SVOR staff and reflected on the website.

While the Department maintains the SVOR, verifying offender s' addresses has always been the responsibility of local agencies. However, the Department recognizes that offender address verification presents resource challenges to these local agencies, and we are reallocating DOJ resources to help agencies with offender AVL compliances, locating noncompliant offenders (if requested) and prosecutorial resources. Collectively, through continued partnerships, we will be able to greatly reduce the AVL compliance rates in Montana.

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We believe these enhancements will be helpful to LLE to ensure compliance by violent and sexual offenders. Please feel free to contact me at 444-2967 or at mbatista@mt.gov if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Batista". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MIKE BATISTA

Administrator

Division of Criminal Investigation

MB:sl:sj