

Texas Observes National Crime Victims' Rights Week



By **Greg Abbott**
Attorney General of Texas

This year, the week of April 6 through 12 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The theme for 2003 is *Victims' Rights: Fulfill the Promise*.

These five simple yet powerful words allow all of us to show our support for crime victims.

In keeping with this year's theme, participants are encouraged to write a "promise" to crime victims. Their messages of support will help victims recover in the aftermath of violent crime. The written promises offer victims supportive community services or assistance in implementing their rights. The individual promises will be prominently displayed to emphasize community commitment to crime victims.

During Crime Victims' Rights Week, we can renew our determination to treat victims of violent crime with compassion and dignity, helping them deal with their losses. We can take

this time to ensure that victims are informed about their statutory and constitutional rights, and we can take steps to help them exercise those rights.

Several ceremonies will be held nationally and locally to commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week. In El Paso, on Sunday, April 6, victims, victims' families, advocates and community leaders plan an early morning Victims' Memorial Walk. Later that evening in Amarillo, the Panhandle Victim Assistance Coalition will host a candlelight ceremony and reception.

Other Texas activities include a bell ringing ceremony in the valley and a release of balloons in Central Texas. The *Nation Unites for Victims' Rights* National Candlelight Observance is scheduled for the National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial in Washington, D.C. The event is sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime at the U.S. Department of Justice (USDJ). The co-sponsors are national victim assistance and allied professional organizations.

The Office for Victims of Crime,

working in partnership with Justice Solutions, has published a National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide and a theme poster. These resource materials are designed to help communities commemorate this special week. Both are available free from the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center.

Our agency administers the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Fund, which pays out-of-pocket expenses resulting from violent crimes, on behalf of victims and their families. If you are a crime victim or the family member of a victim, you can call the Office of the Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division for a crime victim compensation application and other information.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a special time, and we should take this opportunity to redouble our efforts to heal the wounds inflicted by acts of criminal violence. I encourage you to make your own promise – it costs nothing, yet it is priceless.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

April 6 - April 12, 2003
National Crime Victims' Rights Week
Victims' Rights: Fulfill the Promise

Victims' Memorial Walk
Sunday April 6, 2003 - El Paso, Texas

Candlelight Ceremony and Reception
Panhandle Victim Assistance Coalition
Sunday, April 6, 2003 - Amarillo, Texas

The Nation Unites for Victims' Rights
National Candlelight Observance
National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial
Washington, D.C.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week
Resource Guide and theme poster
USDJ Office for Victims of Crime
(800) 627-6872
Download the kit at:
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ncvrw/

Office of the Attorney General
Crime Victim Services Division
Call (800) 983-9933 to apply for
Crime Victims' Compensation

www.oag.state.tx.us
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us.