



Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

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Cold Case Playing Cards Highlight Unsolved Homicides, Missing Persons, Unidentified Remains

[Topeka, Kansas] A deck of playing cards – each including information about an unsolved crime in Kansas – will soon be distributed in state prisons and county jails across the state.

The Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI), in partnership with the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police (KACP), the Kansas Sheriff's Association (KSA) and the Kansas Peace Officers Association (KPOA), have developed the Cold Case Playing Cards as a way of generating tips that may help resolve cases of unsolved homicides, missing persons or unidentified remains.

Each card in the deck includes brief information about an unsolved crime along with a phone number for anyone with information to call: 1-800-KS-CRIME. These cards highlight case details in the hope that a person or persons familiar with a case will come forward with information leading to its resolution. The Cold Case Playing Cards will replace current decks of standard playing cards available in prisons and county jails. Decks will be placed in dayrooms and other common areas, and available through the commissary for purchase by KDOC residents.

“Our agency and our state’s criminal justice community have a commitment to the victims of crimes,” said Kansas Secretary of Corrections Jeff Zmuda. “Our staff members see the unresolved pain experienced by the many families we work with. Hearing the responses from surviving family members when notified that their loved one’s case has been selected for the deck has been powerful and humbling. These families have waited a long time for answers, and this brings some hope.”

“Every call or tip that is shared with law enforcement will be vetted by investigators assigned to the case,” said KBI Director Kirk Thompson. “No matter how small, each tip has the potential of being the missing piece of information needed to finally provide justice to crime victims and their families.”

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Other states have solved multiple cold case homicides, missing person cases and suspicious deaths by making these cards available.

“Not every tip received leads to resolution of a case, but someone usually knows something,” Secretary Zmuda said. “Within Kansas correctional facilities and jails, we have segments of our population who want to do something good, perhaps atone for past mistakes, and they may have information about unsolved cases. Our hope is that we receive actionable intelligence that leads to solving cases.”

Development of the project began March 2021 and included law enforcement partners, representatives from victim services, facility-based programs, private industry, media and families whose lives have been impacted by homicide. Through a submissions process that began in December 2021, local law enforcement from across Kansas provided 81 cases to be highlighted. A selection committee with representatives from KDOC, KBI, the Kansas Attorney General’s Office and local law enforcement prioritized 59 cases to highlight on the first deck of 52 cards.

The oldest case is from 1976 and the most recent case is from 2020. Unsolved homicide cases are from Cherokee, Dickinson, Doniphan, Finney, Ford, Franklin, Geary, Johnson, Leavenworth, Mitchell, Montgomery, Osage, Saline, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties. Missing person cases are from Leavenworth, Lincoln, Pottawatomie, Saline and Sedgwick counties. The unidentified remains case is from Geary County.

“For many of these cases even after years of investigative work has occurred, questions still remain that need answers before a perpetrator can be held accountable,” Director Thompson said. “It’s our hope that by distributing this deck more attention is drawn to these cases, and that someone comes forward with details that will move us one step closer to providing justice.”

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