

## Single story idea develops into something more

Written by Jean Gray, Publisher, Haxtun-Fleming Herald

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Sometimes a story starts with a single idea that expands as it develops.

When I started gathering information for a story about the 13th Judicial District Attorney's office, I anticipated one story based on statistics. Then I met the people behind the statistics. I found that the people of the 13th Judicial District do a job much like the rest of us. They strive to do that job to the best of their ability with the resources available.

That job involves crime, punishment and justice, but often those lines blur because we are a society that values individual rights above all else.

The seed that grew into this section sprouted when I took a seat on the 13th Judicial District's VALE (Victims and Law Enforcement) Board three years ago. That experience opened my eyes to the many aspects our criminal justice system encounters in its attempt to find justice for the victims of crimes.

I then began talking to the people who work within the system. I found them to be hardworking, caring individuals, each with a story to tell. The more I heard, the more I learned, and consequently the more I wanted to share those stories.

Thanks to the help from David McClain, publisher of the *Sterling Journal-Advocate*, and the other newspapers in the seven counties of the 13th Judicial District, we are able to bring these stories to nearly 76,000 readers.

There are more sides to the justice system—the defendants, the public defenders, causes and effects. We leave those stories for another time and place.

Here we take a brief look at the people who seek justice for the citizens of 13th Judicial District—law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts and probation department.

I hope the readers glean as much insight as I did while researching and writing these stories, and that they come to know the people involved.

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*Editor's Note: The 13th Judicial District supplement is inserted in this week's edition of The Holyoke Enterprise*

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