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District Attorney, WK plan Family Justice Center for Bossier

Northwest Louisiana facility would serve as one-stop shop for victims of domestic violence

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A cooperative effort between the district attorney and Willis-Knighton Health System may mean a new one-stop shop to assist the victims of domestic abuse in northwest Louisiana.

District Attorney J. Schuyler Marvin announced last week plans to establish the Family Justice Center of Northwest Louisiana utilizing a donated building from Willis-Knighton. The center would offer limited medical treatment, relocation assistance, advice, outreach programs and more.

"We're really excited about this," Marvin said. "There's nothing in northwest Louisiana like this to assist the victims of domestic violence."

Victims of abuse are often forced to stay in an unhealthy situation because of the difficulties involved with relocation, including finding a new home, paying for basic utilities and moving children to a new school.

"We're going to assist them to deal with all that, to get them back on their feet and out of that lifestyle they were in," Marvin said.

"This came along at the perfect time with the troubles the (YWCA) is going through, but we're not trying to take their place by any means," Marvin said.

Bonnie Hughes, director of Willis-Knighton's Project Neighbor Health program, said she hopes the facility is just a starting point for abused women and their families. "My hope is that the center will provide a safe-haven for women and children who are victims of domestic abuse."

The proposed facility would be modeled after the Family Justice Center of Ouachita Parish in Monroe, the only of its kind in north Louisiana.

Hughes and several members of the district attorney's staff have visited the Monroe facility to gather ideas and gain insight for the center in Bossier.

The property, which was previously occupied by Bossier Parish Community College's physical therapy program, is located at 1513 Doctors Drive in Bossier City.

According to Marvin, the Governor's Office, through the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement, has assigned staff to work with his office and the



Terry Hanley/Press-Tribune

The planned Family Justice Center will provide a assistance for victims of domestic abuse. The facility will be located at 1513 Doctors Drive.

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J. Schuyler Marvin
District Attorney



Terry Hanley/Press-Tribune

(From left to right) Molly McCalman, J. Schuyler Marvin, Bonnie Hughes, Minister Charlie Davis, Angelo A. Roppolo, and Riley Waddell.

U.S. Justice Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women under President Bush's Family Justice Initiative

to secure funding.

Once funding is secured, the center will expand the types of services offered through a

collaborative effort with area law enforcement, healthcare provides and various community groups.