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**Attorney General Pruitt Joins Law Enforcement, Advocates and
Survivors to Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence**

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

OKLAHOMA CITY [October 3, 2011] – Attorney General Scott Pruitt will usher in Domestic Violence Awareness Month Wednesday with the lighting of the Capitol Dome. The ceremony will be the first of several events scheduled to raise awareness of the tragic issue of domestic violence.

“Domestic violence is a serious crime that affects thousands of Oklahoma families each year,” Pruitt said. “We must continue to raise awareness of the problem and find new ways to prevent and end the cycle of violence.”

Pruitt will join law enforcement and advocates across Oklahoma in observing Domestic Violence Awareness Month with events to honor survivors, remember victims and increase awareness.

The scheduled events are:

Capitol Dome Lighting: A dome lighting ceremony will be Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 6:30 p.m. on the South Lawn of the State Capitol. It is open to the public.

Wear Purple Day: Thursday, Oct. 6, is Wear Purple Day. Everyone is encouraged to wear purple to show support for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

DVAM Excellence in Action Awards Presentation and Proclamation: A news conference is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 6, at 1:30 p.m. in the Governor's Blue Room at the State Capitol. Speakers and presenters include: Attorney General Pruitt; Michael Thompson, Oklahoma Secretary of Safety and Security; Marcia Smith, executive director of Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (OCADVSA); Emily Redman, Bryan County District Attorney and president of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association; Evelyn Hibbs, chairwoman of OCADVSA; and Suzanne McClain Atwood, executive coordinator of the District Attorneys Council.

The 2011 Excellence in Action against Domestic Violence Award winners are:

- **Law Enforcement Officer Award:** Regeneia Van Arsdale, Detective Sgt. with the Ponca City Police Department;
- **Prosecutor Award:** Michon Hughes, former assistant district attorney for Wagoner County;
- **Victim Service Advocate Award:** Maria Aceves, shelter manager for the Northwest Domestic Crisis Services Inc. in Woodward.

AG Reception: A special reception will be held immediately following the awards presentation at the Attorney General's Office, 313 NE 21, southwest of the State Capitol. The reception is sponsored by the OCADVSA through Verizon Wireless and the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council.

"A Home for Hope" Poster Project: The DVAM Poster Project is provided each fall for children who receive services from certified domestic violence service providers. The children are asked to create artwork, which is on display throughout October at the Attorney General's Office, 313 NE 21. The 7th Annual Poster Project is sponsored by the Attorney General's Office, the Oklahoman Association of Chiefs of Police and the Oklahoma Sheriffs Association.

"Oklahoma ranks 11th in the nation for the number of women killed by men," Pruitt said. "It's crucial that we get the word out that help is available and that everyone can do their part to stop violence within our families."

Last year in Oklahoma, there were more than 25,000 domestic violence calls to law enforcement and 75 deaths due to domestic violence.

For additional information about the AG's Victim Services Unit, including the 2011 Domestic Violence Awareness Month resource kits, visit www.oag.ok.gov. To report incidents of domestic violence, call the statewide 24-hour hotline at **(800) 522-SAFE**.

The mission of the Attorney General's Victims Services Unit is to improve services for Oklahoma crime victims and families who have suffered injustice at the hands of an offender.

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