



**AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program  
Regional Structure**

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) mission is to safely recover missing, endangered, or abducted children through the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, media, transportation, and other partners by using training and technology to enhance response capacities and capabilities and increase public participation.

In an effort to promote effective outreach and collaboration, the AATTAP has organized the continental U.S. and Canada into five regions. AATTAP Regional Liaisons work closely with AMBER Alert Coordinators, Missing Children Clearinghouse Managers, Child Abduction Response Team (CART) Leaders and other child protection partners within their respective regions to share information and resources, connect programs and personnel to needed training, and assist in the coordination of technical assistance events and services.



<b>Region 1: Jesi Leon-Baron</b>	<b>Region 2: Gus Paidousis</b>	<b>Region 3: Melissa Blasing</b>	<b>Region 4: Janell Rasmussen</b>	<b>Region 5: Derek Van Luchene</b>
Maine	Florida	Ohio	Nebraska	Alaska
Delaware	Washington D.C.	South Dakota	Arizona	California
Vermont	Georgia	Indiana	Colorado	Guam
Rhode Island	Tennessee	Minnesota	Louisiana	Hawaii
New Hampshire	Alabama	Kentucky	Kansas	Idaho
Connecticut	Maryland	North Dakota	New Mexico	Montana
New Jersey	Virginia	Wisconsin	Texas	Nevada
New York	North Carolina	Michigan	Arkansas	Oregon
Pennsylvania	Mississippi	Iowa	Oklahoma	Utah
Puerto Rico	South Carolina	Illinois	Missouri	Washington
Massachusetts				Wyoming
West Virginia				

**AATTAP Tribal Liaison:** The AMBER in Indian Country (AIIC) Liaison acts as a resource to all federally recognized tribes as well as state, local and federal entities which serve Native American or Alaskan Native populations. The AIIC Liaison is responsible for providing information and assistance to facilitate access to training and technical assistance programs designed to improve the capability and capacity of tribal communities to respond to incidents of missing, endangered, abducted and exploited children in Indian Country.



**AMBER Alert's Regional Liaisons:**

**REGION 1: Yesenia "Jesi" Leon-Baron ([leonbaro@fvtc.edu](mailto:leonbaro@fvtc.edu))**

Mrs. Leon-Baron is a Project Coordinator with Fox Valley Technical College's National Criminal Justice Training Center. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University in Miami, Florida, and a Masters in Science in General Management from St. Thomas University. Leon-Baron was a sworn law enforcement officer beginning in 1997 in the State of Florida and retired from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement in 2012. During her career, she was assigned to the Orlando Regional Operations Center Cyber High-Tech Crimes Squad. Leon-Baron was a member of the Federal Bureau of Investigations Innocent Images Task Force, investigating the online exploitation of children and a member of the Florida Internet Crimes against Children Task Force. Under her leadership as the Central Florida Child abduction Response Team Coordinator, their greatest achievement was the recovery Nadia Bloom in 2010. Leon-Baron was also able to successfully lead the team through their first State of Florida certification in 2011. The team became the 13th in the nation and the 4th in the State of Florida to be certified. Yesenia Leon-Baron has collaborated with various local police departments in investigating high-profile missing person investigations to include Jennifer Kesse, Christopher Onda George and most recently, Michelle Parker.

**REGION 2: Gus Paidousis ([paidousi@fvtc.edu](mailto:paidousi@fvtc.edu))**

Gus Paidousis is currently the Security Chief for the Knox County, Tennessee, School District, leading a force of over 100 armed security officers to protect 59,000 students and approximately 8,000 staff members. Mr. Paidousis has been with the school system since May 2013. Prior to serving the school district, Mr. Paidousis served the Knoxville, Tennessee, Police Department for 31 plus years, retiring as a Deputy Chief.

Mr. Paidousis has served in a variety of roles throughout his law enforcement career, to include Patrol Officer, Training Director, Staff Officer to the Chief of Police, as well as Deputy Chief of the Patrol, Criminal Investigations and Support Services Divisions. He was a member of the department's Special Operations Squad for approximately 12 years and was instrumental in developing and implementing the East Tennessee AMBER Alert Plan.

Mr. Paidousis is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and the 191<sup>st</sup> session of the National Academy conducted by the FBI. He also graduated from the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police.

As an associate with the National Criminal Justice Training Center, Fox Valley Technical College, Mr. Paidousis has instructed and presented nationally and internationally on a wide range of child protection topics over the past decade. These topics include the scope and scale of the problem of missing, abducted and endangered children; initial law enforcement planning and response to missing and abducted child incidents; leadership issues around these case types; AMBER Alert program policy and procedural



considerations; and Child Abduction Response Team (CART) development, policy and procedures. Mr. Paidousis also serves as an assessor for the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program's CART Certification process.

**REGION 3: Melissa Blasing ([hansenme@fvtc.edu](mailto:hansenme@fvtc.edu))**

Melissa Blasing has been a Project Specialist for Fox Valley Technical College's National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC) since October 2010. As Project Specialist, she has worked with NCJTC's Washington D.C. Office on federal grants through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). These grants include training and technical assistance (TTA) programs for the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). She now serves as the AMBER Alert Region 2 Liaison for the OJJDP's AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (ATTAP).

Melissa's current responsibilities include managing and facilitating the design and delivery of training and technical assistance for state, local and tribal law enforcement, nonprofit organizations and other criminal justice practitioners. Ms. Blasing also manages the AMBER Alert in Indian Country webinar series, the National Symposium on Tribal Child Protection, AMBER Alert task orders, evaluations, and product development for AMBER Alert course offerings. Her previous experience at NCJTC also includes researching and planning intricate community awareness and outreach projects, such as national publications, e-learning courses and toolkits to serve the criminal justice field.

Prior to joining the staff at FVTC, Ms. Blasing worked with multiple organizations on sexual assault victim assistance and leadership development programs with at-risk youth. As an advocate for the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center, she was responsible for assisting victims and enhancing collaborations among hospital personnel and local law enforcement. She also helped coordinate and develop presentations to bring awareness of sexual assault issues through trainings and community awareness events.

Ms. Blasing's experiences with at-risk youth helped develop a partnership among outdoor experiential learning and promoting leadership and personal development among at-risk youth. As a manager and lead facilitator for leadership and teambuilding development for Outdoor Endeavors at Saint Cloud State University in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, she developed trainings, coordinated presentations and helped with the program implementation that is currently used today.

Ms. Hansen-Blasing graduated with honors from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota and holds a Bachelors and Master's Degree in Criminal Justice.



**REGION 4: Janell Rasmussen ([rasmusja@fvtc.edu](mailto:rasmusja@fvtc.edu))**

Janell Rasmussen has spent over 20 years working in Public Safety to develop, implement and operate multiple statewide law enforcement programs that have been highly successful and nationally recognized. During her time at the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), Rasmussen was responsible for the development and operations of multiple statewide programs, including the Minnesota AMBER Alert Plan, the Missing Children's Clearinghouse, the Communication & Duty Officer Program, the Crimes Against Children in Indian Country Conference and the President's Initiative on Missing & Unidentified Persons. She also served in capacities as Legislative and Media Coordinator during her tenure at the BCA. Janell is a highly regarded professional known for building collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups, enhancing government operations and her work in Law Enforcement Training. Janell recently left the BCA as Director of Criminal Justice Training & Education after 16 years to continue her work in child protection as Deputy Director at the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis. Janell has received certifications from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Training School - Instructor Development Program, International Association of Chiefs of Police - Leadership in Police Organizations Program, National Judicial College - Tribal Faculty Development Program, and numerous training certificates on a multitude of topics including Management, Leadership, Human Trafficking, AMBER Alert, Domestic Violence, Investigative Resources, Information Sharing, Project Management and Program Development.

**REGION 5: Derek VanLuchene ([vanluche@fvtc.edu](mailto:vanluche@fvtc.edu))**

Derek VanLuchene brings a unique perspective to the issues of sex offender management and child abduction. In 1987, when Derek was 17 years old, his 8 year old brother Ryan was abducted and murdered by a repeat sex offender. Ryan was taken right from the family's backyard in a rural Montana community. Since that time, Derek has devoted himself to issues of sensible sex offender management as well as child abduction response.

Derek spent 18 years as a Montana Law Enforcement Officer working for both the Conrad Police Department and The Montana Division of Criminal Investigation. Currently, Derek manages Ryan United, a non-profit organization dedicated to his brother. Through Ryan United, Derek provides resources to crime victims, Law Enforcement, Corrections officials specific to sex offender management, child abduction and community safety.

Derek works as an associate for the National Criminal Justice Training Center at Fox Valley Technical College, as well as with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. In addition, Derek serves as a Senior Fellow with the US Department of Justice's, Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Managing, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). Mr. VanLuchene has been instrumental in developing curriculum for Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, and Corrections officials relating to sex offender management and child abduction response. Derek has also been active in developing and delivering curriculum specific to sex offender management and the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse in Indian Country.



Through his personal and professional experiences, Mr. VanLuchene speaks to criminal justice professionals and community organizations across the nation about how important their role is when it comes to protecting children from predation. Derek and his family have been instrumental on a state and national basis promoting tougher laws and sensible management of sex offenders.

**TRIBAL LIAISON: Hedi Bogda ([bogda@fvtc.edu](mailto:bogda@fvtc.edu))**

Hedi Bogda is an associate employee with Fox Valley Technical College's National Criminal Justice Training Center. Ms. Bogda has a long history working in tribal law. She not only has her own law office, but is currently the Appellate Justice for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Court of Appeals in Belcourt, ND; the General Counsel for the Native American Tribal Energy Association in Las Vegas, NV; and is the Attorney/Consultant for the Pauma Band of Mission Indians in Pauma Valley, CA.

As Appellate Justice for Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Court of Appeals, she presides over and adjudicates appellate cases in the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Appeals Court. She prepares clear and concise court orders based on decisions rendered in all appeal hearings.

As General Counsel for Native American Tribal Energy in Las Vegas, NV, Hedi specializes in providing legal advice and representation on a variety of issues, including but not limited to: matters of Indian law; tribal, state and federal regulatory law; tribal sovereignty; energy law; environmental law; water and natural resource law; land use planning; employment law; commercial, business and economic development matters; taxation; land into trust; and cultural resources. She negotiates and drafts numerous agreements, drafts legal documents, legal instruments, legal memoranda and opinions for and on behalf of the Native American Tribal Energy Association. She also researches and interprets case law, statutes, legislation, regulations and various legal documents concerning a variety of legal issues.

As the Attorney/Consultant for Pauma Band of Mission Indians, Hedi specializes in providing legal advice and representation to departments, divisions and entities of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians on a variety of issues, including matters of Indian law; tribal, state and federal regulatory law; tribal sovereignty; environmental law; water and natural resource law; land use planning; employment law; commercial, business and economic development matters; gaming; taxation; land into trust; criminal and civil law; domestic violence and sexual assault; and cultural resources. Negotiates and drafts numerous agreements, tribal codes, policies and ordinances on behalf of the Pauma Band of Mission Indians. She also specialized in the development of a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). Prepares and drafts legal documents, legal instruments, legal memoranda and opinions, researches and interprets case law, statutes, legislation, regulations and various legal documents concerning a variety of legal issues. Prior to her current positions, Hedi worked as an attorney, specializing in tribal law.

Ms. Bogda earned her Juris Doctor Degree, May 1997 from University of North Dakota School of Law, Grand Forks, North Dakota. She also attended Saint Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. Hedi is also a member of both the Minnesota State Bar Association and South Dakota Bar Association.