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This publication was prepared under Cooperative Agreement number 2013-MU-MU-K011 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

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# WHY AN **AMBER ALERT** MAY NEVER BE ISSUED

## STUDY FINDS HALF OF SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIMS NEVER REPORTED MISSING

A yearlong study on sex trafficking in Las Vegas found the majority of victims were teenagers under the threat of violence from their perpetrators---and more than half of all underage victims were never reported missing. The results of the study have broad implications for the AMBER Alert program because law enforcement and others may never be notified for many abducted children in extreme danger.

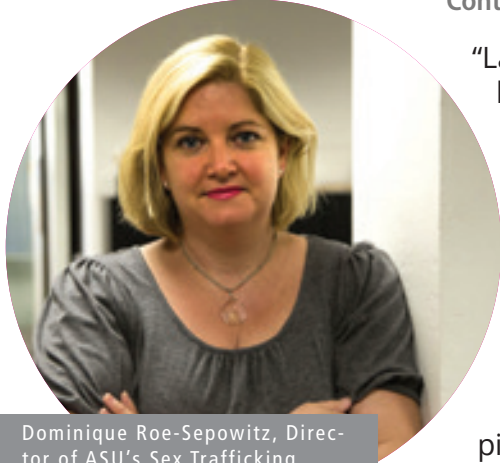
The Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research conducted the study with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) on all sex trafficking cases in 2014. The study included 190 victims in 159 separate sex trafficking cases. The findings were presented in Las Vegas on February 13, 2017.

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# WHY AN AMBER ALERT MAY NEVER BE ISSUED

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Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Director of ASU's Sex Trafficking Intervention Research Office

"Law enforcement has not let researchers in to do this type of study before," said Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Director of ASU's Sex Trafficking Intervention Research Office. "We saw pictures, read interviews, found strengths and ways we could do things better."

Roe-Sepowitz and her team of researchers found two-thirds of the sex trafficking victims were minors ranging in age from 12 to 17. The average teenage victim was 16 years old. One in 5 victims was brought to Las Vegas from out of state, mostly from California.

## THE LAS VEGAS EXPERIENCE

The Las Vegas metropolitan area has a population of 2 million people, yet experiences an additional transient population of 42 million visitors annually. LVMPD Captain Sasha Larkin said officers are building relationships with casinos, hotels, churches and members of the LGBT community to raise awareness of the problem, increase the capacity for businesses and individuals to assist in identifying and reporting suspected trafficking, and to better equip all involved to do their part in helping sex trafficking victims.

"We take this personal," said Larkin. "It is our responsibility for all of us in the community to take it personal. What if we raised awareness in the community so there were never victims in the first place?"

The study found less than a quarter of victims and less than 20% of minor victims were willing to cooperate with law enforcement.

"There are those who believe what happens in Las Vegas, stays in Las Vegas," said Kevin McMahill, LVMPD Undersheriff. "This is not the case for human traffickers. Human trafficking doesn't stay here. It is brought here to live off the suffering of others and we have to stop it."

McMahill noted many of the victims who were not reported missing were in the foster care system. "Those who are already disenfranchised fall through the cracks a second time and become preyed upon again."

Nevada authorities say the study confirms that new methods must be used to inves-

Sex Trafficking Victim Place of Origin





Sasha Larkin (left) and Cindy McCain (right) discuss the findings of the study.

tigate and ultimately prevent sex trafficking crimes, and to better respond to the needs of victims.

“We know brain chemistry changes when a person is exposed to trauma,” said Elynn Greene, LVPMD Victim Services and Trafficking Manager. “Our typical interrogation techniques do not work. We need to engage survivors, because they will teach us how to do our job.”

Finding victims and prosecuting perpetrators can also be a challenge because prostitution is legal in some Nevada counties. Greene said decriminalization would not help because the law is often the only way to provide resources to victims.

She said they are building a 24-hour response team so investigators can get help from advocates at any time they are needed. Those advocates provide safety, support and education to victims who are reluctant to get help. “The ones who are not willing to talk need the most help,” she added.

### THE LURE AND THE LOCK

The study provides insight into how victims are lured into sex trafficking. The findings illustrate the luring and manipulation at play.

- 31.5% of victims were recruited through romantic relationships with traffickers.
- 29% of victims were groomed through

social media.

- Victims were also approached on the street and at malls.
- 10% were kidnapped.

“This is not surprising, but it confirms what we heard in the field and we now have data to support it,” said Jim Walters, Program Administrator for the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program. “The child is relying on the trafficker for basic needs. When a young person sees this route as a way to improve their situation, then it becomes dangerous.”

The study found a “Romeo pimp” often identifies himself as a husband or a boyfriend and promises the victim a better future, protection and the finer things



Elynn Greene, LVPMD Victim Services and Trafficking Manager



Jim Walters, Program Administrator for the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program

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# WHY AN AMBER ALERT MAY NEVER BE ISSUED

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of life. The “Guerilla pimp” uses violence and terror to control the victim.

Sex traffickers used different types of violence to keep victims from leaving or making a report to law enforcement. The traffickers used 1 or more of the following: physical violence (56.2%), psychological violence (49.4%) and sexual violence (11.2%). A weapon was used in 13.8% of the cases.

The accounts of the brute violence suffered by sex trafficking victims are staggering; law enforcement, victim service providers with whom they work, and members of the larger Las Vegas community must increase awareness and understanding of the incredibly destabilizing impact such violence has on victims. A sex trafficking survivor at the presentation emphasized more studies need to be done to better understand and reckon with the violence caused by customers. “The closest I came to death was at the hands of a customer.”

## MODERN SLAVERY

Wesley Duncan, First Assistant Attorney General of Nevada, referenced a quote from William Wilberforce when he spoke with the English House of Commons in 1789

about the slave trade: “Having heard all of this, you may choose to look the other way but you can never again say that you did not know.”

Duncan said more than 2 centuries later we are still fighting slavery and we still have a duty to warn others.

“This is not a third world problem, it is a first world problem,” said Duncan. “This is going on in the streets, the bars and the shopping malls. We need to break up this evil and abolish human trafficking in our lifetime.”

Cindy McCain, Chair of the McCain Institute in partnership with ASU’s Human Trafficking Advisory Council, emphasized that public education must be part of the solution. “We need to make human trafficking and slavery part of everyday conversation. The same way we now talk about breast cancer or politics.”

McCain noted efforts underway to stop publications like Backpage from advertising sex trafficking victims and robustly promoting their exploitation. She explained the ride sharing company Uber has joined in the effort to promote awareness and identification with its drivers, citing the recent bravery and commitment of a driver who acted to identify and help rescue a young sex trafficking victim who was a rider in his vehicle. “If we think we are ahead of this, the sex traffickers are still miles ahead,” said McCain. “I have called sex trafficking victims ‘disposable children’ because they vaporize.”

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Case Analysis Director Angela Aufmuth said the Las Vegas study corroborates what the Center is seeing on a national scale. “What we see repeatedly is that there are many kids being picked up in



Cindy McCain, Chair of the McCain Institute



Wesley Duncan, First Assistant Attorney General of Nevada

“Having heard all of this, you may choose to look the other way but you can never again say that you did not know.”  
- William Wilberforce

sex trafficking stings who were never reported missing,” said Aufmuth. “If you have a kid running away over and over again. Instead of thinking they are bad kids, we need to find out what are they running from and what are they running to.”

### A CALL TO ACTION

The study clarifies challenges for those involved with AMBER Alert programs due to under- and non-reporting of trafficking victims; namely that trafficked children are often not reported missing, most victims are not willing to let anyone know they are in danger, and if located, most will not cooperate with law enforcement due to the manipulation and coercive control of their traffickers.

Researchers found law enforcement agencies are often limited in investigating numerous, highly complex cases. Authorities also struggle to help victims from continued physical violence and psychological or “invisible violence.” Finally, prosecutors find sex trafficking cases are much more difficult to solve and win.

These findings underpin clear recommendations for forming authentic and genuine relationships with victims in order to de-

velop trust and provide safety for them and accountability for the perpetrators. To support this transformation, researchers suggest law enforcement agencies work closely with state Missing Person Clearinghouses and domestic violence and victim service providers to help identify missing children. A victim advocate is needed for all vice or human trafficking investigations units. Additionally, a full-time cyber-investigator should be used to help monitor sex trafficking activity taking place online and through social media.

Finally, researchers say more education is needed for law enforcement, the media and the public. “We need to hold sex traffickers accountable,” concluded LVMPD Undersheriff Kevin McMahill. “We need to keep spreading the message that this is not a victimless crime and will not be tolerated in our community.”

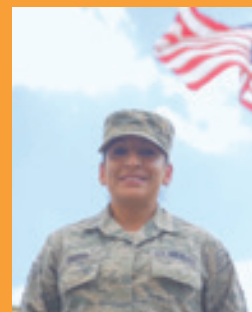


Kevin McMahill,  
LVMPD Undersheriff

## AMBER ALERT BRIEFS

### AMBER ALERT INSTRUCTOR HONORED FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Cox Communications honored Josefina Sabori as one of its community honorees for Hispanic Heritage Month. Sabori works in the Crimes Against Children Unit at the Pima County, Arizona, Sheriff's Department. She is also a nationally recognized expert on human trafficking and an instructor with the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance program, National Criminal Justice Training Center at Fox Valley Technical College.



# FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



## TENNESSEE AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR MARGIE QUIN

Margie Quin was promoted in 2007 to Assistant Special Agent in Charge at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) which included duties as the state AMBER Alert Coordinator and Missing Person Clearinghouse Manager. She also began working on human trafficking cases in 2010. Quin specialized in electronic surveillance for drug cases when she started with TBI in 1998. Prior to joining TBI, Quin served for 5 years with the Cobb County, Georgia, Police Department.

### **WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?**

The Tennessee AMBER Alert program has been successful from its inception because of the great partnerships that were formed at the beginning. The Tennessee broadcasters, Department of Transportation and the National Weather Service were instrumental in building a great partnership that elevated the credibility of the initiative statewide. For the last 10 years, Tennessee has tried to stay on the cutting edge of child abduction response. We certified our Child Abduction Response Team (CART) program in 2009, the fourth team in the country to achieve certification. We have re-certified every year since. We also continue to train and work with local agencies to improve the immediate and initial response to missing children incidents. The state has gone from averaging 10-12 activations per year to 5-6 per year over the last 2 years. We believe this is because of the efficiency in response at the local level.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTH OF YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM?**

The challenges in maintaining the effectiveness of the AMBER program are technical and environmental. The technical challenges continue to evolve as technology improves. The quick notification to the public is still the key to recovery in so many cases. That being said, AMBER, along with other alerts, must compete for the attention of the American public. In this technology age, peoples' attention is often divided between numerous things and across a wide array of devices. Capturing the public's undivided attention is the great challenge in 2017 and beyond.

### **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE?**

The program should continue to evolve and change with "the times." I would like to see the program devote more time to training and awareness in 2017.

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We are excited to introduce this new feature in the AMBER Advocate Newsletter! With each issue, we will talk with different AMBER Alert Coordinators, learning more about the men and women who work tirelessly to administer and continuously strengthen the AMBER Alert programs in their states. To kick off this exciting new feature, we talked with the AMBER Alert Coordinators for Tennessee and Illinois.



## ILLINOIS AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR CRAIG BURGE

Craig Burge works for the Illinois State Police (ISP). He has been the state AMBER Alert Coordinator and Missing Person Clearinghouse Manager since 2011. He started his career with the ISP working on sex offender registration and management. His experience with providing sex offender information for the legislature and the public prepared him in his mission to promote child safety.

### **WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?**

Our AMBER Alert program is simple and effective. Law enforcement, broadcasters and the public want a program that is easy to comprehend. We have one alerting system with the same criteria since its inception so everybody is familiar with how it works. What makes our program so successful is our AMBER Alert partners and their dedication to child safety. We have an AMBER Alert Task force that is made up of various agencies, entities and associations that really want to help with spreading the word about an abducted child. We have a tremendous relationship with the people at the Illinois Broadcasters Association who dedicate their airwaves for AMBER Alert messages and child abduction safety issues. The support the AMBER Alert program receives from these partners is what makes our program a success.

### **WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTH OF YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM?**

As the AMBER Alert program evolves, it must grow and change with the times. People are always finding new ways to get their information. The AMBER Alert program must utilize the newest social networks and technologies to provide the public with information through the platforms they are using to access their news and alerts. It is always a challenge to find the appropriate funding and resources necessary to stay on top of the technology advances. Our AMBER Alert program is a privately funded program. No state resources are appropriated for its use. That makes building relationships with private agencies and organizations extremely important.

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# AMBER ALERT ON THE FRONT LINES:



Sergeant Deborah Flory, Maryland State Police

## CITIZENS RESPOND QUICKLY TO MARYLAND AMBER ALERT ISSUED FOR INFANT TAKEN IN CARJACKING

A mother was carrying groceries into her home when a teenager jumped into her white SUV and sped off. The vehicle was running, the keys were still in the ignition and her 11-month-old son was still strapped in his car seat. The Baltimore, Maryland, Police Department got the call at 1:30 p.m. on October 26, 2016.

Police officers originally reported the case as a carjacking because of a language barrier with the mother. They soon found out about the child inside the vehicle.

Sergeant Deborah Flory of the Maryland State Police is also the state's AMBER Alert Coordinator. She was in a parking lot and headed to an interview on an unrelated case when she received information about the abduction and AMBER Alert request at 2:05 p.m.

"My partner and I always have our laptops with wireless routers ready so we are able to get an AMBER Alert out without delay from our vehicles," said Flory.

She quickly determined the case met the criteria for an AMBER Alert: the victim was under the age of 18 and police had verified the abduction; the carjacking showed the child was in danger and descriptive information was available for the public about the suspect, victim and vehicle. The AMBER Alert was issued at 2:34 p.m.

"I am always on pins and needles until I find out the child has been located and I can cancel the alert," said Flory.

The AMBER Alert was distributed to all law enforcement agencies and media in Maryland, including the state's Coordination

and Analysis Center, Center for Missing and Unidentified Persons, Highway Administration and Lottery. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was also notified. Alerts were posted on social media, highway signs, toll booths and cell phones through the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA). The vehicle's license plate was also entered into the state's license plate reader program.

Charlmaine Wilson and Omar Parrine were walking along the street when they received the AMBER Alert on their cellphones. The pair soon spotted a toddler matching the alert description in his car seat on a sidewalk next to a porch.

"It's cruel, unbelievable and don't make sense," said Wilson to WJZ-TV. "I thought it was a doll baby but when I went towards the house, it was a real baby."

"The baby was kicking, crying and screaming," said Parrine. "I usually don't take this way home from school but something told me to take this way today. It's a blessing."

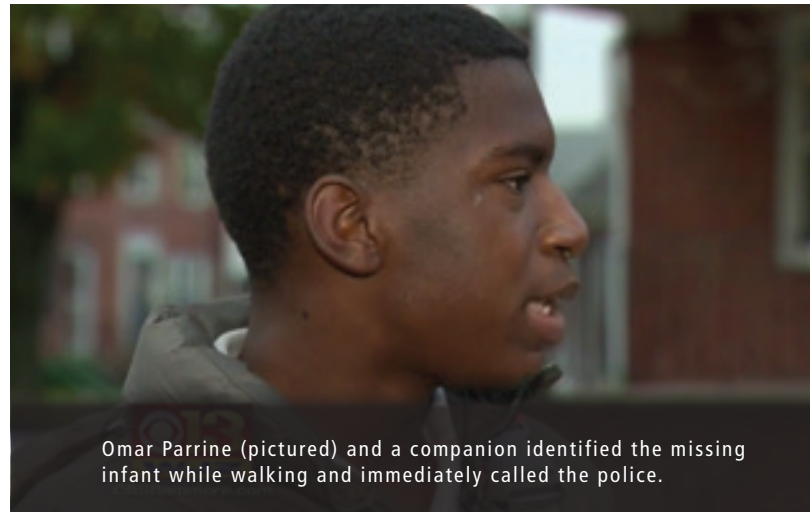
Police recovered the child at 4:00 p.m. and the AMBER Alert was canceled 5 minutes later. The baby was unharmed, but taken to the hospital as a precaution. The stolen SUV was located and the suspect was taken into custody.

Flory felt relief when the child was found and is thankful for the 2 young people who responded to the alert. "That is what makes the AMBER Alert system work," she said. "The alert is reaching everyone and they did their part."

She also credits the Baltimore police officers for acting quickly. "They made the decision

and requested the alert within 30 minutes after the child went missing," said Flory. "This is key for recovering a child."

Maryland's AMBER Alert program started in 2003 and Flory has been the coordinator since the beginning. She shares duties on



Omar Parrine (pictured) and a companion identified the missing infant while walking and immediately called the police.

the Child Recovery Unit with Corporal Chris Heid. They also oversee Silver Alerts, critical missing children cases, parental abductions and cases involving juvenile victims of human trafficking for the Maryland Child Exploitation Task Force.

During the past 14 years, Maryland has received 160 requests to issue AMBER Alerts, approving activation of alerts in 39 cases. Flory and her team work hard to swiftly yet carefully make decisions in these cases, making sure AMBER Alerts are used when the required information is available, and then issuing an alert so the public can help bring the child home safely. Flory has this simple advice for everyone else involved with AMBER Alerts: "Be prepared." 🌸

# AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



## CANADIAN SOCIAL WORKER SEEKS “ALEX ALERT” FOR MISSING AT-RISK CHILDREN

A British Columbia social worker is hoping Canada will create a new alert for missing at-risk children that do not fit the criteria for an AMBER Alert. Patricia McDonald says an “Alex Alert” is needed to prevent what happened to Alexandra Radita 4 years ago. The 15-year-old boy weighed only 37 pounds and was covered in bedsores and infections after a judge returned him to his parents. Emil and Rodica Radita were found guilty of first degree murder for starving and neglecting their son. McDonald would like an alert that can be issued to authorities across provinces to assist in locating and rescuing at-risk children who disappear. ↪



## MALTA NOW USING FACEBOOK FOR AMBER ALERTS

Police in Malta are now using Facebook, the country’s most popular social media site, when issuing AMBER Alerts. The Mediterranean island partnered with Facebook in March 2017 to send information and photos when a child is abducted. The country’s AMBER Alert system also sends the alert to broadcasters, variable-message road signs, public transport, text messages and other social media. ↪



## CANADIAN PROVINCE CONSIDERING SILVER ALERT

A Manitoba, Canada, legislator is proposing creating a Silver Alert system for missing elders or people with cognitive disabilities. Silver Alerts are already issued in British Columbia. Len Isleifson said the system is needed to help elderly or vulnerable people who wander away. ↪



## ONTARIO WOMAN CHARGED FOR FALSE AMBER ALERT

A Mississauga, Ontario, woman was charged with making a false police report after she said she saw a female being forced into a van on January 15, 2017. An AMBER Alert was issued after her family reported a 15-year-old girl was missing. The teen was found safe and police determined she had not been abducted. ↪

## GLOBAL EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND AMBER ALERT PROGRAMS

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) continues to work with countries around the world to make sure AMBER Alerts work and missing and abducted children come home safely. In 2015, ICMEC released the **Model Missing Child Framework**, which outlines 12 key criteria countries should consider when developing a national strategy/response for missing children. The framework assists countries with building strong, well-rounded national responses, and to facilitate more efficient investigations, management and resolution of missing children cases.



ICMEC and **AMBER Alert Europe** co-authored and published the **Rapid Emergency Child Alert System Framework** in 2016. This year ICMEC released **Photo Distribution Framework**, which offers a strategy for photo distribution to stakeholders, media and the public in the search for a missing child. The document also clarifies the differences between a photo distribution strategy and an AMBER Alert system. AMBER Alert Europe has also created **Understanding and Managing Risk in the Context of Missing Persons**, an extensive review of the difficulty of determining risk and different elements to consider in a missing person case. ↪



Click bold titles to read more

## BRITISH COLUMBIA AMBER ALERT LEADS TO SAFE RECOVERY OF CHILD IN WASHINGTON

Police in Bellingham, Washington, safely recovered a 9-year-old girl in January 2017 after an AMBER Alert was issued in British Columbia. The child had been taken by her 48-year-old mother who no longer had custody and violated a court order by crossing the border. Officers found the pair at a church after finding the suspect's car at a nearby hotel. ↪



## AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

### TRIBAL CHILD PROTECTION SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULED IN NORTH DAKOTA

Tribal officials and AMBER Alert partners will gather for a child protection symposium on June 1-2, 2017, in Bismarck, North Dakota, to share ideas on helping children in Indian Country. The symposium will include presentations on child exploitation, human trafficking, and endangered and abducted children. Presentations will address the latest tools and technologies to support AMBER Alert programs and ways to promote long-term solutions for public safety in Tribal communities. Speakers will include Human Trafficking Victim Advocate Cindy McCain, North Dakota Senator Heidi Heitkamp and a child sex trafficking survivor. ↪



# AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



## REPORT RECOMMENDS CHANGES TO KANSAS AMBER ALERT SYSTEM

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) is recommending a simplification of the state's AMBER Alert program. The KBI reviewed the system following concerns raised when an AMBER Alert failed to go out to cellphones after a mother and 3 children were abducted. The report recommends speeding up the process by giving more officers authority to request an alert. Other recommendations include:

- Creating a checklist to be used when activating an AMBER Alert
- Inviting media to participate in AMBER Alert reviews
- Establishing an advisory board that meets annually
- Focusing on technological advances for the program



## MICHIGAN CHANGES AMBER ALERT CRITERIA

Michigan has changed the state's AMBER Alert criteria to make sure notifications are used only for child abductions. AMBER Alerts had previously been authorized for missing children with severe mental or physical disabilities. Those cases will now be eligible for an Endangered Missing Advisory, which will be sent to the media but not to cell phones.



## IDAHO SENDING AMBER ALERTS THROUGH EMAIL

The Idaho State Police is using a new notification system which allows the public to also receive AMBER Alerts by email. While residents must sign up to get the new email alerts, they will still receive alerts on their cell phones through the Wireless Emergency Alert System.



## MINNESOTA OFFICIALS WARN OF FAKE AMBER ALERT ON FACEBOOK

The Olmsted County, Minnesota, Sheriff's Office is warning the public of a fake AMBER Alert that has been posted about an abducted 3-year-old boy. The alert has been circulating on Facebook since 2010 and includes a description of the suspect's car and license plate. Authorities are asking the public not to share alerts that do not come through the state's AMBER Alert system.



## OKLAHOMA MOTHER CHARGED FOR FALSE AMBER ALERT

An Oklahoma City mother who claimed her car was stolen with her 2 toddlers inside has been charged with filing a false AMBER Alert. Police say they spent \$5,000 in personnel services and a helicopter in the search. Just before activating an AMBER Alert, police found the "stolen" SUV and the children at their grandmother's home.

## VOLUNTEERS, ACTORS AND SEARCH DOGS PARTICIPATE IN NORTH TEXAS DRILL TO FIND ABDUCTED CHILD

The Northeast Texas Child Abduction Response Team (CART) held a mock training exercise that involved finding a 7-year-old kidnapping victim. The August 2016 event included numerous CART members, volunteers, a bloodhound and a German shepherd. An alert Boy Scout also followed the dogs and helped in the search. The bloodhound found the “abductor” and his “victim” after just under 2 hours of search. ☺



## PARENTS OF MURDER VICTIM AND SUSPECT PROPOSE CHANGES IN MISSOURI AMBER ALERT PLAN

The parents of a 10-year-old girl who was abducted and murdered 3 years ago are asking Missouri legislators to change the state’s AMBER Alert system. The parents of Hailey Owens and the parents of the alleged suspect are supporting “Hailey’s Law” which would integrate the AMBER Alert System with 2 other law enforcement computer systems so officers could enter incident information digitally. Both families say more could have been done to save Owens if the AMBER Alert, including the suspect’s license plate number, had gone out earlier. The bill has been given the green light by a Missouri House of Representatives committee. ☺



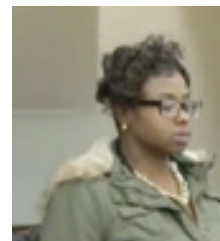
## NORTH CAROLINA WILL NOW ISSUE A BLUE ALERT WHEN AN OFFICER IS ATTACKED

North Carolina will now issue a Blue Alert when seeking a suspect after a law enforcement officer is violently attacked. The North Carolina State Highway Patrol will send information about the suspect and the suspect’s vehicle in the alert. The Blue Alert system is a voluntary effort of state law enforcement, broadcasters, transportation, lottery and the Center for Missing Persons. ☺



## OHIO MOTHER PLEADS GUILTY FOR REQUESTING AMBER ALERT TO GET HER STOLEN CAR

A Columbus, Ohio, woman pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor falsification charge for telling police her 4-year-old daughter was inside her stolen car. An AMBER Alert was issued but was cancelled after a report came in that the girl was at her aunt’s house. The woman hoped police would find her car sooner if an AMBER Alert was issued. ☺



# FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK

## TENNESSEE AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR MARGIE QUIN

Continued from page 8

**PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE AMBER ALERT SUCCESS STORY.** In 10 years, there have been so many cases. One stands out recently that was a case out of Knoxville, Tennessee. A woman was murdered by her estranged husband and he took their 3-year-old child. He used her ATM card in Ohio, and within 45 minutes, Ohio activated its system and a citizen quickly called about being behind the suspect's vehicle. In that case, the AMBER Alert activation directly resulted in the recovery of the child. It worked in the exact way it was designed to work.

**HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS AN AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?** How has it not? That might be easier to answer. If we aren't out here working for the kids, who are we working for? There is no more vulnerable population than children. They are also our most precious resource. We must continue to do all that we can to protect kids in this country. ☺

## ILLINOIS AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR CRAIG BURGE

Continued from page 9

**WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE? WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE PROGRAM?** I would like to see the AMBER Alert program be connected in every state. I would like to see a day when an AMBER Alert is issued in Illinois, if we need that alert to be released in another state, it can be done in a matter of minutes. Child abductions are not bound by geographic borders and neither should AMBER Alerts. The hope is one day all states will be connected to the same system, which will allow AMBER Alerts to be sent out seamlessly across state lines. When time is of the essence, we need this quick connection with other states.

Alert and decided to go out and look for the child. The child was left on the side of the road in a rural area, but the farmer was able to hear the faint cries of the child as he was driving along in his diesel pickup truck. It is a truly amazing story with an outcome that still brings a smile to my face.

**PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE AMBER ALERT SUCCESS STORY.** It was September 2012. A 3-week-old child was discovered by a farmer and his wife because they heard the AMBER

**HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS AN AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?** I have been in law enforcement for almost 18 years, mostly dealing with child safety issues. I can tell you there is no better feeling you can have in your law enforcement career than to return a child home safely. It is a feeling that makes everything worth it. ☺

[askamber@fvtc.edu](mailto:askamber@fvtc.edu)

**THE AMBER ADVOCATE**