

THE AMBER ADVOCATE

ISSUE 3 2019

UNWELCOME ALLIANCE

PAGE 3

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT
PAGE 6

AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY
PAGE 8



AMBER[®]
ALERT

IN THIS ISSUE:

UNWELCOME ALLIANCE PAGE 3
FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT: JENNIFFER PRICE PAGE 6
AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY PAGE 8
AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL PAGE 10
AMBER ALERT BRIEFS PAGE 13

.....

This publication was prepared under Cooperative Agreement number 2017-MC-FX-K003 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.

.....

Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

AMBER ALERT INFO:
For AMBER Alert Training
& Technical Assistance,
contact:

Jim Walters, Program Administrator
AMBER Alert Training &
Technical Assistance Program

877-71-AMBER
askamber@fvtc.edu

Training & Technical Assistance Information:
<https://amberadvocate.org>
<https://amber-ic.org>

EDITORS:
Bonnie Ferenbach, ferenbac@fvtc.edu
Paul Murphy, murphyp@fvtc.edu

GRAPHIC LAYOUT:
Whitecap Interactive
whitecap.io
info@whitecap.io

UNWELCOME ALLIANCE

The tragic ties between abducted children and child sex trafficking are the focus of 2019 National AMBER Alert Symposium



The tragic connection between missing and abducted children and child sex trafficking was spotlighted at the 2019 National AMBER Alert Symposium held April 16–18 at the Wa-Ke-Po Resort & Conference Center near Scottsdale, Arizona. The theme for the symposium was “Child Sex Trafficking Along the Northern and Southern United States Border Regions.”

Matt Dummermuth, the former National AMBER Alert Coordinator for DOJ, said during the keynote address that his experience prosecuting child sex crimes makes him appreciate the value of the AMBER Alert program.

“Your work is really a matter of life and death,” said Dummermuth. “Our top priority should be to ensure there are no victims in the first place, and the AMBER Alert will be central to accomplishing this mission.”

The symposium included 125 AMBER Alert Coordinators, Missing Persons Clearinghouse Managers and Child Abduction Response Team

(CART) members from 43 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP), a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initiative, sponsored the training.

Best Practices

The second edition of the AMBER Alert Best Practices Guide was released at the symposium. AATTAP brought together experts from across the country, including representatives from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), to develop an expanded and enhanced guide. It now provides examples of ‘what works’ for all professional and families involved with AMBER Alerts.

The guide is just one example of how AATTAP is applying part of the \$104 million in funding provided by the DOJ for its child protection initiatives.

Continued on page 4

UNWELCOME ALLIANCE

Continued from page 3

AATTAP also continues to support and expand its no-fee, on-demand eLearning and customizable classroom courses. "People in classes have solved cases as a direct result of participating in them," said Jim Walters, AATTAP Program Administrator.

Child Sex Trafficking

Participants learned about tactics being used to lure, abduct, groom and exploit child sex trafficking victims and the need for an effective multidisciplinary response. Presentations and discussions around the scope, scale and nature of the problem in the U.S are highlighted in these 2018 statistics:

- More than 23,500 endangered runaways were reported to NCMEC; one in seven was a victim of sex trafficking.
- Of the 5,100 cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline; almost 1,400 involved minors.
- NCMEC's CyberTipline received 18.4 million reports; most involving child pornography, online enticement, child sex trafficking and child sexual molestation.

Participants indicated a need to ensure victims of trafficking, exploitation or who run away after being lured by a predator are included in the AMBER Alert process.

Indian Country

Elizabeth Strange, First Assistant U.S. Attorney in Arizona, said her state was a good choice for the symposium because Arizona borders Mexico and four states and is home to 23 federally recognized tribes. Her office works with tribal leaders to develop the best prevention and emergency response plans for each community.

Strange said she is seeing more victim-recovery success stories, including a 24-year-old Navajo woman who was taken from her family when she was nine months old. A nurse in Connecticut helped solve the case by using DNA to confirm her identity.

Harlan Cleveland, Emergency Management Director for the Navajo Division of Public Safety, spoke about creating his tribe's AMBER Alert program. "We like our system. It works very well for us," he said. "For example, we were recently able to recover an endangered child on the same day the child was reported missing."

Significant progress is also being made in Indian Country with the following initiatives:

- The Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act is providing funding and training to help tribes implement functional child protection alerts.
- The National Survey of Federally Recognized Tribes and State AMBER Alert Coordinators, gleaning data from 100 tribes, found the majority of tribes do not have their own child abduction emergency response plans. More work is needed to promote collaboration between tribes and states to include tribes in their respective state AMBER Alert plans, or to support tribes' development and enactment of their own plans.
- The DOJ's Tribal Access Program (TAP) provides access to national crime information systems for federally authorized criminal and non-criminal justice purposes; tribal participation is expanding from 47 to 72 tribes.

- The AMBER Alert in Indian Country website has an array of information to support work related to trafficking, including investigation, intervention, and the prevention of victimization and exploitation.

More than 1,600 tribal officials and community members have been trained since DOJ initiated AMBER Alert in Indian Country in 2007.

Our partnership with tribes underscores one of the enduring challenges to the AMBER Alert network – that child abductors and child predators generally do not observe jurisdictional boundaries. Those challenges become even more imposing when the boundaries in question are our international borders.

Southern Border

The Southern Border Initiative (SBI) was created by DOJ in 2006 to extend the AMBER Alert Program into Mexico. So far, more than 700 state, local and federal child protection officials in the U.S. and Mexico have participated in joint training exercises, and have attended six regional meetings and a tri-national AMBER Alert conference.

AATTAP Program Administrator Jim Walters said Mexico is an important partner due to the high propensity for both U.S. and Mexican children to be abducted and/or trafficked across the border. “At the end of the day, it’s about developing relationships,” he said. “It’s about having resources at the ready when abductors and their victims cross border lines.”

Continued on page 16

A mother’s story

Pattie Bastian shared her nearly 32-year journey to bring her daughter’s killer to justice. Her 13-year-old daughter Jennifer took a bike to ride to a park near Tacoma, Washington, on August 4, 1986. Her body and bike were found in the park 28 days later.

“The murder was so shocking, so unusual,” she said. “The community mourned but we couldn’t comprehend anything like that ever could happen again.”

A few years after her daughter’s death, Bastian decided to have a children’s safety fair to help other children and their families. While the fair started small, 10 years later, more than 10,000 people attended at the Tacoma Dome.

Detectives investigated more than 2,300 tips, but fewer leads came in as time went on. In the spring of 2016, a detective utilized new DNA technology to create a composite of the killer’s physical attributes, including skin complexion, hair and eye color.

On May 10, 2018, Bastian received word the murderer had been found. Robert Dwane Washburn pleaded guilty to the crime and was sentenced to nearly 27 years in prison on January 25, 2019.

Bastian told participants to keep in mind the deep impressions their work and interactions will have on families after a child abduction.

“Your display of humanity and concern will be remembered long after the case is solved, becomes cold, or never ends,” she said. “You are a special brand of humans. I’m proud to be here with you and, on behalf of the families you will contact, and, in whose lives you will make a significant difference, I say thank you.”



FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



Jenniffer Price oversees the Wisconsin AMBER Alert Program and serves as the Child Abduction Response Team (CART) commander. She has been in law enforcement since 1997 after starting as a patrol officer with the Wausau Police Department. Price worked briefly with the Madison Police Department at the University of Wisconsin before becoming a narcotics special agent for the Wisconsin Department of Justice in 2005. In 2008, she became a founding member of the Wisconsin Department of Justice's CART and has been the commander since 2011.

Price was promoted to be the Director of Special Operations in 2013, overseeing several departments including the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, Statewide Intelligence Center, Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children and Adults, and the AMBER Alert Program. In 2017, she led her team to become the only certified team in Wisconsin and the 22nd certified CART in the country.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT/MISSING PERSONS PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES IT SUCCESSFUL?

The Wisconsin AMBER Alert Program is embedded in our fusion center along with the Clearinghouse and CART. This integration provides immediate access to criminal intelligence technologies, analytical support, CART resources, as well as family liaison support for any missing child case. The program is a collaborative effort with our partners at the Wisconsin Broadcaster's Association, Public Radio, Educational Communications Board, EAS Committee,

Department of Transportation, Division of Lottery, and the Dane County Public Safety Communications Center. This collaborative effort makes the program successful by ensuring each and every AMBER Alert activation is as timely and accurate as possible.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO FIND MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

On July 4, 1994, my 14-year-old cousin disappeared from his home and his body was located less than a week later. His killer – Joe Clark – wasn't identified until 1995 when he attempted to kill another teenage boy. Clark was convicted by a jury of my cousin's murder and sentenced to life in prison.

When my cousin went missing, I was attending the University of Wisconsin – Madison, studying apparel design. When his body was found, I changed my career path and began studying Behavioral Science and Law and Criminal Justice. I graduated with a BS in Behavioral Science and Law and a minor in Criminal Justice. It has been my drive and passion ever since to be involved in protecting missing and exploited children.

I often wonder if the AMBER Alert Program could have made a difference in my cousin's disappearance and murder. Having seen the Wisconsin AMBER Alert Program result in the safe recovery of children also motivates me to continue this work.

WHAT EMOTIONAL TOLL DO YOU FACE DURING AN AMBER ALERT?

I get so motivated because I have such a personal connection and that drives me to put everything I have into these AMBER Alerts. I never want it to end like it did for my family. That's what's driven me all these years. All but one Wisconsin AMBER Alert has resulted in a safe recovery.

EVERY AMBER ALERT IS PERSONAL FOR WISCONSIN'S JENNIFFER PRICE

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE.

It's hard to identify one story from all of the successful AMBER Alerts in Wisconsin because each one carries a unique memory. Whether it is the safe recovery of ten-month-old twins who were abducted during a car theft; the eight-year-old boy who was safely returned after his abductor saw the AMBER Alert and turned himself in; or Jayme Closs, where a citizen saw Jayme after escaping from her captor and recognized her from the AMBER Alert.

In each case, we learn valuable lessons about our AMBER Alert process, how to continually improve upon our AMBER Alert activations, and how our CART can enhance investigative efforts during an AMBER Alert.

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

Having a child in the family go missing and never return shapes my commitment to missing and abducted children. My work in the ICAC task force, AMBER Alert program and CART has only strengthened my commitment through various child exploitation and missing child investigations I have worked throughout the years.

DOES BEING A PARENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN WHAT YOU DO AT WORK?

Being a parent really does impact me a lot. Even when I see an AMBER Alert in another state, I always worry and hope they find the child. I have a 17-year-old daughter and two stepsons, ages 10 and 12. Having a child of your own hits home, especially when the missing child is the same age and gender.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT PROGRAM AND OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE?

The AMBER Alert program is robust, with a long history of success in finding missing children, both in Wisconsin and throughout the United States. I think continued funding is needed to support the AMBER Alert programs and Clearinghouses in each state.

HOW HAS TRAINING HELPED YOU IN AMBER ALERT CASES?

AMBER Alert and CART training have helped me, as well as members of our AMBER Alert program and CART. The training has been integral to maintaining proficiencies and remaining abreast of current investigative trends and technologies.

AMBER Alerts and CART activations are low-frequency, high-risk events. Continual training is necessary for our teams to be the best of the best when looking for a missing child. Perhaps my cousin could have been found alive if an AMBER Alert program and trained CART personnel were available to provide the necessary investigative, analytical and family liaison support that we have in place today.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER AMBER ALERT PARTNERS?

Always evaluate each and every activation to learn from them and improve or enhance your efforts. Make sure your personnel are trained and receive continued training to evaluate and activate any AMBER Alert. Bringing your AMBER Alert and CART programs together is the most effective way to respond to a missing child. Those efforts are not only critical in the investigation, they are important and meaningful to the family of the missing child. 🍷

AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Navajo Nation member returns home to teach her tribe at child sex trafficking symposium

The Navajo Nation held a two-day symposium to address child sex trafficking in tribal communities. The training, entitled “Responding to Child Sex Trafficking & Exploitation in Tribal Communities,” was held May 30-31 in Shiprock, New Mexico.

Provided by the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP), the training emphasized group collaboration, planning and implementation of awareness projects to keep tribal communities and children safe. Participants discussed specific threats and warning signs of sex trafficking involving indigenous children.

The symposium was a homecoming for Tyesha Bahe-Wood, a presenter and then-associate with the AMBER Alert in Indian Country initiative. She’s a Navajo member from Window Rock, Arizona, and attended Navajo Preparatory School in Farmington, New Mexico, 30 minutes east of Shiprock.

“It is uplifting to know that tribal communities, and my community in particular, are taking initiative to become more aware of the threats of sex trafficking,” said Bahe-Wood. “We work together as a

group because we are all part of a family protecting our children.”

Bahe-Wood and AATTAP Program Manager Byron Fassett were given protection beads made by an eight-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl. The beads are made from dried juniper and are also called “ghost beads.”

“As a non-tribal person, this not only allowed myself and Tyesha to provide our knowledge on the crime of sex trafficking, but also provided me with the opportunity to learn more about its impact on tribal communities,” said Fassett.

The class also presented Bahe-Wood with a three-pound bag of Cortez Bluebird flour, something she said is an “essential item in a Navajo household.” Bahe-Wood was recently promoted to a project coordinator with AATTAP. 🍌



Fassett addresses the symposium

MONTANA GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION TO CREATE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS TASK FORCE

Montana Governor Steve Bullock has signed legislation to create a Missing And Murdered Indigenous Person's Task Force in that state. Under Senate Bill 312, the Looping in Native Communities (LINC) Act creates the task force which includes a representative from each tribal government on Montana's seven reservations; other members represent the state's AG's Office, the DOJ and the Highway Patrol.

The task force's primary duties include identifying jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, local and tribal Law enforcement and community agencies; and work on interagency collaboration, communication and cooperation to remove jurisdictional barriers and increase reporting and investigation of missing indigenous persons.

Eleven members of the task force have been appointed by Montana Attorney General Tim Fox. "I'm confident the members of

the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force will make positive strides in determining the scope of this issue as well as bring forward good recommendations to increase cooperation among public safety agencies and tribal governments," Fox said of the task force.

Training on missing indigenous persons and the crime of sex trafficking, such as one held in June in Helena, are aligned with the task force's work, a joint effort of the Montana AG's Office and DOJ, and include presenters from state and federal agencies.

Mark Pollock, a member of the Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force and the Blackfeet Tribal Council, spoke with a reporter about the June training event in Helena. "To hear their stories, you can't help but be affected by it," he said. "My hope is that we don't have to have those stories like that out there anymore." 🍌

TRIBES FROM ACROSS U.S. GATHER FOR INDIAN COUNTRY AMBER ALERT SYMPOSIUM

Pamela Foster, the mother of Ashlynne Mike, an 11-year-old girl who was kidnapped and murdered in the Navajo Nation, challenged tribal, federal, state and local officials to do more to protect and find missing and abducted Native American Children. Foster was one of the featured speakers at the National AMBER Alert in Indian Country Symposium, held July 30-August 1 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The symposium brought together more than 200 tribal leaders, public safety, and emergency management officers to focus on implementing the Ashlynne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2018, a law providing funding and resources to integrate state and regional AMBER Alert Plans with federally recognized tribes. A complete report on the Indian Country Symposium will be included in the next issue of The AMBER Advocate. 🍌

AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



NETHERLANDS BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO POST AMBER ALERTS ON ATMS

The Netherlands is the first country in the world to expand AMBER Alerts to automated teller machines (ATMs). Starting in May 2019, more than 300 ATMs began showing photos of missing children on the screens in airports, shopping malls, popular tourist attractions and other selected locations. The ATMs will show AMBER Alerts and the Vermist Kind Alert, a notification for an endangered missing child. 🇳🇱



FOOD COURIERS NOW DELIVER MISSING PERSONS POSTERS IN THE NETHERLANDS

The meal delivery service Deliveroo included posters of missing persons while bringing food during the month of May in the Netherlands. The "Ride to Find" campaign had the company's couriers bring posters of one of five people who have been missing for a long time. The campaign was tried in December 2018 in the United Kingdom and helped find three missing people. Belgium also participated in the Ride to Find campaign in January 2019. 🇳🇱



INDIA STATE DEVELOPS APP FOR MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN

The state of Madhya Pradesh in India is developing an app to disseminate information about crimes, including missing and abducted children. The app is based on the U.S. AMBER Alert program. State Law Minister P.C. Sharma said, "Information about crimes and sketches of accused will reach the common man. It will help to arrest them in lesser time." 🇮🇳



BRITISH MISSING PERSONS INVESTIGATORS EXPAND ACROSS BORDERS

The United Kingdom Missing Persons Unit is now bringing information and investigation assistance to other European countries. The Missing Persons Unit is part of AMBER Alert Europe's Police Expert Network and is now offering its national database to help find missing individuals and identify bodies without identification. British officials are encouraging other law enforcement agencies to join the network. 🇬🇧

MISSING ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL HELPED CREATE A EUROPE-WIDE AMBER ALERT SYSTEM

The disappearance of 11-year-old Madeleine McCann in 2007 from Algarve, Portugal, garnered international attention and eventually became the catalyst for AMBER Alert programs and additional resources to find missing and abducted children in Europe.

The case is the subject of a new Netflix series “The Disappearance of Madeleine McCann.” The missing girl’s mother, Kate McCann, also wrote a book detailing her efforts to get better alert systems for missing children in Europe. “It was clear to Gerry and me that if such a procedure had been in use in Portugal, Madeleine might have been swiftly tracked down,” wrote McCann. 🍷

AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



CANADIAN POLICE CHIEFS WANT LICENSE PLATES TO REMAIN ON THE FRONT OF VEHICLES

Police chiefs in Ontario, Canada, oppose a plan to no longer require front license plates on vehicles. The law enforcement leaders say the plates are needed to track down vehicles, especially ones being sought in AMBER Alerts. "That's not going to assist us in solving these crimes and perhaps saving these children in AMBER Alert situations," said Jeff McGuire, Ontario Association Chiefs of Police Executive Director. 🇨🇦



AUSTRALIAN LOTTO COMPANY OFFERS \$300,000 TO SUPPORT AMBER ALERT AND MISSING CHILDREN

Golden Casket, the company overseeing some of Australia's lotteries, has pledged \$300,000 to an organization working to keep children safe. The Daniel Morcombe Foundation supports the country's AMBER Alert programs, provides assistance to crime victims and supports families of missing persons.

The foundation was created in 2005 by Bruce and Denise Morcombe after their 13-year-old son Daniel was abducted in 2003. Golden Casket also broadcasts information about missing and abducted children at 900 outlets in Queensland. The latest donation is funded by unclaimed lottery money. 🇦🇺



EUROPEAN POLICE CREATE ANIMATED VIDEO FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Police from twelve European countries launched a prevention campaign for International Missing Children's Day with the animated video "Stay Safe with Simon." The two-and-a-half-minute video can be seen in languages spoken in Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands, The Republic of Srpska, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Malta and Austria. 🇪🇺

AMBER ALERT BRIEFS

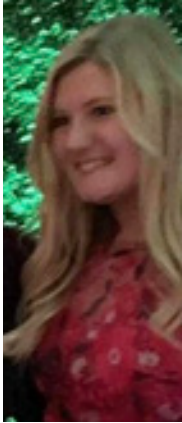
TWENTY YEARS LATER FOR THE CHILD IN THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL AMBER ALERT

Rae-Leigh Bradbury was eight-weeks-old when the first successful AMBER Alert was issued after she was taken by her babysitter in Arlington, Texas. She was found unharmed 13 hours later and her abductor served ten years in prison.

"That was the hardest 13 hours of my life ever," said her mother Patricia A. Sokolowski. "The (detectives) came to me at about midnight and said 'we're going to activate an AMBER Alert. We haven't used it, it's the first time. We want it to work.'"

The emergency response system was put in place two years earlier after the disappearance of Amber Hagerman. Bradbury was given the Hope Award by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) on May 25. She says her experience inspired her to intern for NCMEC in Austin, Texas.

"There are kids right now not knowing where their parents are. I just can't imagine wondering, 'Where's my mom? Where's my dad?'" said Bradbury. 🍷



TEXAS APPROVES ALERTS FOR MISSING ADULTS AND MENTALLY ILL VETERANS

Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed into law a bill that allows law enforcement to issue alerts for missing adults believed to be abducted or endangered. The CALE (Civilian Abduction or Life Endangerment) Alerts will send information about Texans between ages 18 and 65 through text messages and roadside signs.

The bill was pushed by Allison Steele after her daughter Cayley Mandadi was killed in 2017. The state didn't issue an AMBER Alert because the victim was 19 years old. Virginia also issues alerts for missing adults between 18 and 65.

Governor Abbott also signed a law creating the Camo Alert, an AMBER-style alert that would be issued for missing military members with a mental illness who may be a danger to themselves or others. The Camo Alert will be part of a five-year pilot program beginning in September 2019, and expiring in 2023. 🍷



AMBER ALERT BRIEFS

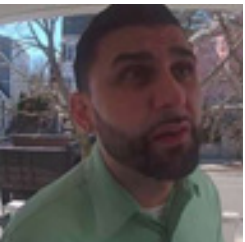


TWO WOMEN SEEK TO FIND MISSING PEOPLE OF COLOR ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Natalie Wilson and her sister-in-law Derrica Wilson have been working since 2008 to make sure efforts are being made to find missing people of color. The Black and Missing Foundation helps families work with police and the media to make sure the public hear about their loved ones.

The two women were inspired to start the non-profit foundation after learning about the struggles the family of Tamika Huston had of getting media coverage after the young African-American woman went missing in 2004. Her remains were found a year later and her ex-boyfriend was sentenced to life in prison.

"We're finding that when people of color, men and women, are reported missing, they're deemed to be involved with some type of criminal act, they're stereotyped, and their cases aren't taken seriously," said Natalie Wilson. 🍌



MASSACHUSETTS POLICE WARN OF AMBER ALERT ID KIT SCAMMERS

Police in Malden, Massachusetts, issued a warning about a possible scam after learning a person was going door-to-door and asking homeowners if they ordered AMBER Alert ID Kits from the police union. After the warning was issued, police identified and questioned the man. The individual was working for a life insurance company and said he misspoke about being affiliated with a police organization. Police advised him to change his sales pitch. 🍌



OHIO A.G. RELEASES MISSING CHILDREN REPORT

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yosi released a report for National Missing Children's Day, documenting 25,619 people who went missing in the state in 2018—including 19,879 children. The report noted that 96.1 percent—or 19,510 children—were recovered safely by the end of the year.

Ohio had 19 attempted child abductions in 2018 involving 14 girls and five boys. About one-third of the suspects were driving vehicles and half of the incidents occurred while the children were walking to or from school. 🍌

AMBER ALERT ISSUED AFTER MOM FORGETS LEAVING HER CHILDREN AT DAYCARE

Police in Waco, Texas, issued an AMBER Alert after a mother reported her three- and four-year-old daughters had been kidnapped by a man named "Chris." As the investigation went on police discovered the mother forgot she left her children at a daycare center. Daycare workers took the children home after they were unable to contact the mother. Child Protective Services took custody of the children after they saw their living conditions. 🍷



TEXAS FATHER CHARGED FOR MAKING FALSE CLAIM FOR AMBER ALERT

Dallas police filed charges against a father for making a false report that prompted an AMBER Alert for his four-year-old son. The man claimed his child and car were taken from a parking lot. Police found the car three hours later and discovered later the boy had been with his mother the entire time. 🍷



MICHIGAN WOMAN GETS PROBATION FOR MAKING UP ABDUCTION

A Michigan mother was ordered to serve three years of probation for claiming her baby had been kidnapped, which sparked an AMBER Alert. The woman told police her car had been stolen with her 18-month-old daughter inside. Someone saw the alert and told police the child was safe with her father. The mother admitted to making up the story because of a dispute with the girl's father. 🍷



TEXAS CITY INSTALLS MASS NOTIFICATION WARNING SYSTEM

Bowie, Texas, installed warning sirens on utility poles throughout the city to be used for emergency evacuations and AMBER Alerts. The \$150,000 mass notification warning system replaced 10 sirens with four sirens that are more powerful than the originals. The system can include a pre-recorded message and can be focused on one or more specific areas. 🍷



ARIZONA SHERIFF HOSTS SEX TRAFFICKING SYMPOSIUM

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Department in Phoenix, Arizona, offered all county personnel, patrol deputies, correction officers, probation officers and other key stakeholders detailed instruction on how identify, recover and respond to victims of sex trafficking and to ensure traffickers face justice.

Cindy McCain, co-chair of the Arizona Trafficking Council and wife of the late U.S. Senator John McCain, was the first speaker at the Sex Trafficking Symposium held June 17, 2019.

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program provided experts

to present on topics related to helping vulnerable victims of sex trafficking, including:

- Warning signs of trafficking;
- Investigative techniques; and
- Developing a county-level response, to include identifying and recovering victims, and connecting them with advocacy and services.

During the event, a survivor of trafficking shared her story and spoke about her interaction with law enforcement and others, explaining the impact those interactions had on her. 🌹

Continued from page 5

Challenges

The symposium provided AMBER Alert partners with an opportunity to share prominent challenges they face, including:

- **Workload:** Many are overwhelmed with handling numerous alerts and handling other duties unrelated to the AMBER Alert.
- **Support:** Some incidents go unnoticed until there is a high-profile case.
- **Funding:** Most do not have legislative funding in place, leaving little room for program enhancements, training or outreach.
- **Integration:** Additional assistance and cultural training are needed to integrate tribes into state AMBER Alert systems.
- **Alert fatigue:** Many are concerned the effectiveness of the AMBER Alert is diminishing because of numerous alerts (Blue, Silver and Ashanti), indicating

most cases can already be handled with Endangered Missing Advisories.

- **Missing partners:** Participants would like broadcaster association members and representatives from Mexico and Canada to take part in future trainings to keep alerts functioning effectively.

Even though participants were away from their offices during the symposium, Walters noted it didn't stop them from actively working on cases. During the three-day symposium, at least five cases were handled, with four children safely recovered.

"It's a reminder that our AMBER Alert Coordinators are on call every day, no matter where they are or what they are doing," said Walters. "It was amazing to watch." 🌹

askamber@fvtc.edu

