



News Release

AMBER ALERT MARKS 20TH YEAR

Task Force Members:

IL State Police – Chair
IL Broadcasters Association
National Weather Service
IL Department of Transportation
IL Emergency Management Agency
IL Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board
IL Central Management Services
IL State Board of Education
IL State Emergency Communication Committee
IL Sheriff's Association
IL Association of Chiefs of Police
IL Secretary of State Police
IL Press Association

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the first America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert broadcast in Illinois. The first AMBER Alert broadcast took place at 5:35pm on November 26, 2002 in LaSalle, Illinois.

The AMBER Alert System is named after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was abducted and later found murdered in 1996 after playing near her home in Arlington, Texas. In response to community concern, the Texas Association of Radio Managers and law enforcement created the first AMBER Plan. Today, all 50 states have similar plans.

The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of missing children. The Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, the Illinois Press Association, the Illinois Tollway, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Lottery, and the National Weather Service, to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases. The Alerts are broadcast through TV, radio, road signs, cellphones, and other data-enabled devices.

Since its inception, the Illinois AMBER Alert System has been used to broadcast 118 critical messages of abducted children with the Alert accounting directly in the recovery of 67 children and indirectly for 22 more.

According to statistics compiled by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, since its inception, AMBER alerts have aided in the successful recovery of more than 1,100 children nationally.

“When a child goes missing, every second counts. That is why the AMBER Alert Program’s greatest tools are the eyes and ears of the public. The proof of the effectiveness of an AMBER Alert Broadcast is in the numbers,” said Illinois AMBER Alert Coordinator Craig Burge. “This program is unlike many others because it is a public partnership. Citizens in Illinois can take pride in the fact that they can help each and every time a child is abducted by simply being aware of their surroundings and reporting what they see to law enforcement officials. This collaborative effort will continue to provide the basis for the success of AMBER Alert broadcasts for years to come.”

For more information about AMBER Alerts or find out how to receive AMBER Alerts on your cell phone, please visit www.amberillinois.org.