

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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DPS Commemorates AMBER Alert Awareness Day Jan. 13

MONTGOMERY — Alabama is among states nationwide that are joining together Jan. 13 to recognize the 13th anniversary of the AMBER Alert program and to commend its mission of locating and safely recovering abducted and endangered children.

In Alabama, 14 AMBER Alerts have been issued through the state's Emergency Alert System since the state's AMBER Alert program became operational in May 2003. Alabama's AMBER program is conducted in partnership with the Alabama Broadcasters Association, the Department of Public Safety, participating local law enforcement agencies and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

“The AMBER program has proven time and again to be an invaluable tool in the safe recovery of abducted and endangered children,” said Col. J. Christopher Murphy, Department of Public Safety director. “When circumstances indicate a child has been abducted and is in harm's way, time is of the essence,” said Murphy. “Key to this program's success in Alabama and nationwide is its capacity to get identifying information out quickly and to as many people as possible.”

Murphy repeated the five criteria that must be met before an AMBER Alert may be issued: law enforcement confirms that a child has been abducted; the child must be younger than 18; circumstances indicate to law enforcement that the child is endangered; there is enough available descriptive information about the child, abductor, or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help in locating the child; and the child's information is entered into the National Crime Information Center Database.

The AMBER Alert Plan had its beginnings in 1996 when 9-year-old Amber Hagerman was kidnapped and brutally murdered near her Arlington, Texas, home. The AMBER program evolved from a local network of radio broadcasters to include programs in all 50 states.

Beginning in 2007, e-mail notice of AMBER and Missing Child Alerts in Alabama became available to individual subscribers. Since that time, more than 2,000 people have signed up to receive the e-mail notifications. Persons who wish to receive the electronic notifications may do so by completing an online application form available on Public Safety's Web site, <http://dps.alabama.gov/>, under the Community Information Center link.

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for more information contact:

Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

(334) 242-4445 • <http://dps.alabama.gov/>