

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Public Safety Marks National Missing Children's Day, Introduces New Child Safety, Abduction Prevention Awareness Program

MONTGOMERY — The Alabama Department of Public Safety and DPS's Alabama Center for Missing and Exploited Children will help commemorate National Missing Children's Day on May 25. Started in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan, the day honors the nation's commitment to locating and recovering missing children.

A focus of National Missing Children's Day this year is the Take 25 program. Launched in 2007 by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the campaign encourages parents, educators and others to take time – 25 minutes – to speak with children about safety and abduction prevention. The program's Web site, www.Take25.org, offers safety tips and other information to aid adults in arming children with information to help keep them safe from exploitation and abduction.

DPS Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy encouraged increased awareness of child safety and abduction prevention. "We must all play a part in protecting the most vulnerable among us – our children – from abduction or other harm."

Murphy said state troopers with DPS's Public Information/Safety Education Unit, in conjunction with ACMEC, have developed a safety program to increase awareness among adults of the problem of missing and exploited children. The program incorporates tips and other information from the Take 25 program, and is available to civic and other groups upon request. The PI/E Unit may be reached by calling (334) 242-4445.

In preparation for National Missing Children's Day, the Department of Public Safety earlier this year participated with the Alabama Department of Education in a poster contest sponsored by the national center. Alabama's winning poster was submitted by Lily Patterson, a student at Locust Fork Elementary School in Blount County. On May 25 her poster and posters submitted by winners from other participating states will be posted on the national center's Web site: <http://missingkids.com>.

for more information contact:

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

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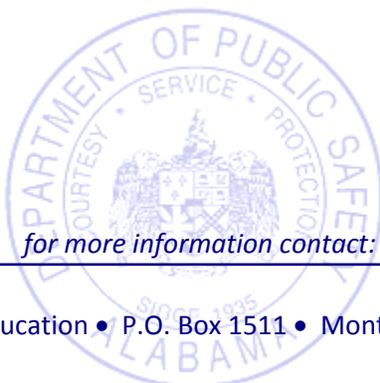
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Alabama's Center for Missing and Exploited Children is the state clearinghouse for information on missing children and adults. ACMEC works closely with the national center and networks with other state, local and federal agencies to identify and locate missing children and adults. ACMEC also is responsible for issuing AMBER Alerts, Missing Endangered Child and Missing Senior alerts. Information about the AMBER alert program and missing persons in Alabama is available on Public Safety's Community Information Center Web site, <http://community.dps.alabama.gov>.

Recent FBI/NCIC reports indicate there are approximately 600 active cases involving missing juveniles in Alabama. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an estimated 800,000 children are reported missing in the United States each year. Of that number, 200,000 are abducted by family members, and 58,000 are abducted by non-family members, for which the primary motive is sexual. Each year, 115 children are the victims of the most serious abductions; they are taken by non-family members and either murdered, ransomed or taken with the intent to keep.

An analysis of attempted abduction cases by NCMEC found that in 83 percent of the cases, the child escaped would-be abductors through his or her own actions. Thirty-two percent actively resisted (yelling, kicking, pulling away, running away or attracting attention), while 51 percent recognized something was not right and responded by walking or running away.

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