

**OHIO AMBER ALERT STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 16, 2009**

Ohio AMBER Alert Chairman, Mark Patchen, called to order the April 16, 2009, meeting of the AMBER Alert Steering Committee at approximately 1:30 p.m. The first order of business was the roll call taken by Susan Benton.

I. ROLL CALL - PRESENT

Governor's Designee, Ohio Emergency Mgmt. Agency – EMA	Mark A. Patchen, Chairman
Dept. of Public Safety, Ohio State Highway Patrol – OSHP	S/Lt. Rob Jackson
Ohio Association of Broadcasters – OAB	Executive VP Christine Merritt
Federal Bureau of Investigation – FBI	Agent Harry W. Trombitas
Attorney General's Office, Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse	Brent Currence, Director
Victims Advocate	Linda E. Maloy
Ohio Department of Transportation – ODOT	Alan Phillips
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police – OACP	Chief Clayton Harris
Buckeye State Sheriff's Association – BSSA	Sheriff Ronny J. Shawber
	Crawford County

ROLL CALL – ABSENT

State Emergency Communications Committee – SECC	Wayne Fick
Local or Regional AMBER Plan	Michael R. Rankin, Esq.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ohio Emergency Management Agency – EMA (Public Affairs)	Tamara McBride
Ohio State Highway Patrol – OSHP	Lydia Wagner
Ohio State Highway Patrol – OSHP	Lt. Don Grimwood

A QUORUM WAS DECLARED.

II. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 15, 2009, MINUTES (ADOPTED)

The Committee dispensed with reading of the January 15, 2009, Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee Meeting minutes. Chairman Patchen asked for any additions, corrections or deletions to the minutes. Being none, Mr. Harry Trombitas made a motion to adopt the minutes, Mr. Alan Phillips seconded. Motion carried by all.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Statewide Conference

Mr. Brent Currence informed the Committee that the statewide conference went very well; he did not receive any complaints. There was one comment about having the conference annually. Considering the snowstorm that we had, the turnout was good. Mr. Currence thanked the Ohio Department of Transportation for use of the facility and the committee

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for all their help and participation. S/Lt. Rob Jackson suggested that in the future we may want to look at a larger facility as there was a need for more breakout rooms and if all that were registered had attended, the facility would have been crowded. Mr. Currence said the total attendance was approximately 160 with 250 registrations. Mr. Harry Trombitas stated that there was a large attendance of CART team members.

B. Missing Children Poster Contest

Mr. Brent Currence briefed the Committee on the status of the poster contest. He stated that he worked with the Ohio Department of Education to get the word out to the schools and he heard from some teachers that the bad weather played an issue with some schools participating. Poster judging by Committee members was done in mid-March. There were twelve posters submitted. A first, second and third place winning poster was shown to the Committee. April 26 through May 2 is "National Crime Victims Week." There will be a kick-off rally at the Supreme Court on Sunday, April 26, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The poster winners and families have been invited. The Governor and Attorney General will be in attendance. Contest winners will be presented certificates and their framed posters as part of the rally. All Committee members are invited to attend.

C. Newspaper Association

S/Lt. Rob Jackson informed the Committee of a meeting with the Newspaper Association at which participation of AMBER Alerts was discussed. The Newspaper Association has agreed to work with their membership in the soliciting cooperation in the web posting of AMBER Alerts. Ms. Christine Merritt will e-mail the letter out to the association explaining the procedure on how to receive e-mails on AMBER Alerts. A hard copy of the letter will be sent by mail. The association was not interested in doing a summary full-page advertisement for the "Time-Out for AMBER Alerts", and did not want to participate in Missing Adult Alerts.

D. Review of AMBER Alerts

The Steering Committee reviewed the two AMBER Alerts issued since the last meeting, one from Montgomery and one from Champaign Counties. Alerts are running smoother now due to the training impact. Both the Alerts resulted in successful recoveries. No changes or corrections to the Alert summaries were recommended.

E. Review of Missing Adult Alerts

Mr. Brent Currence briefed the Committee on the Missing Adult Alerts. There have already been 56 Alerts this year and he is averaging approximately 8 calls per week. Some have suggested that there should be tighter criteria for Missing Adult Alerts based on our numbers. Some partners are getting overwhelmed with alerts and are bailing out of receiving any alerts, most notably the trucking companies. We have already lost approximately 200 to 300 trucking companies off both the AMBER and Missing Adult lists. We have temporarily suspended Missing Adult notification to the trucking companies. The Committee was asked if the suspension should continue. Ms. Christine Merritt suggested only sending alerts to truckers that involve a vehicle. S/Lt. Rob Jackson suggested leaving truckers on AMBER Alerts "only". Mr. Alan Phillips suggested

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providing information to truckers through notifying truck stops. He will stop at the Flying "J" Truck Stop to find out how the truck stop notification to truckers works. It was pointed out that the death rate is fairly high in the Missing Adult Alert cases. After some discussion, S/Lt. Rob Jackson made a motion to restore the truckers list and to send a fax to each notification recipient offering them the opportunity to receive the Missing Adult Alerts or to opt-out. Motion seconded by Mr. Harry Trombitas. Motion carried by all.

G. Take Time-Out for AMBERAlerts

S/Lt. Rob Jackson updated the Committee on the Take Time-Out for AMBER Alerts. The program is complete and was a success. The Public Service Announcement (PSA) was sent out and aired on quite a few stations. A lot of high schools participated. An attempt was made to gather data on the number of individuals who signed up to receive alerts as a result of the campaign but the wireless industry has an agreement with carriers that they will not give statistics.

H. Canada/United States Partnership

S/Lt. Rob Jackson informed the Committee that he has sent out an e-mail two different times and there seems to be a waning or lack of interest on Canada meeting related to cross-boarder issues. At the next National Conference there may be an opportunity to strengthen the Canada/US partnership.

I. Emergency Alert System (EAS) Conference.

Ms. Christine Merritt attended the National Emergency Alert System (EAS) conference in Washington. She informed the Committee that the rollout of Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is taking longer than expected. The conference focused on where the next generation of EAS is going as it relates to digital alerting. CAP is a universal language for the distribution of alerts.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Clarification of Alert Titles

S/Lt. Rob Jackson raised a concern that the terms used in the naming of alerts are not consistent. Every time there is a Missing Child Alert he is hearing mixed terminology used by the media. We need specific clear titles of alerts because the more we issue something with different names the more confusion it creates with the media and public. S/Lt. Jackson suggested that we settle on a consistent title for missing children of Missing Child Alert or Endangered Missing Child Advisory. A review of past meeting minutes will be conducted to determine the proper alert title as assigned by the Committee.

B. Media Webanar

Ms. Christine Merritt informed the Committee that she and Clark Donley continue to work on holding an AMBER media webanar rather than doing it as a seminar. Topics will include; AMBER Alert – what is the criteria and how decided, Missing Child Alert and

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Missing Adult Alert. The Committee agreed to hold the webinar, looking at a date near the May 25, Missing Children's Day.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on Thursday, July 16, 2009, at 1:30 p.m., Room 204, at the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, 2588 West Dublin-Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43235-2712.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by S/Lt. Rob Jackson, seconded by Mr. Brent Currence. Motion carried by all.

DATE

**MARK A. PATCHEN, CHAIRMAN
AMBER ALERT STEERING COMMITTEE**