

## **AMBER: Children in Jeopardy workshop set to help Ohio media find missing children**

Columbus, Ohio – More than 1.3 million children go missing each year, according to a recent study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. Of those, only two-thirds are ever reported to law enforcement.

Still fewer are ever found or found alive.

One tool that helps find missing or abducted children is the AMBER Alert program, an often misunderstood topic by members of the media.

“That’s why the Ohio Association of Broadcasters and Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee, are allowing us to conduct a free workshop in conjunction with the 2010 Ohio AMBER Alert Conference on April 20,” said Randy Covington, lead instructor from the University of South Carolina. “The seminar is being taught to help the media in Ohio better understand the nuances and sensitivities associated with missing children cases, especially when an AMBER Alert is called or not called.”

The success or failure of an AMBER Alert often rests on the ability of the local media to use the tool effectively, Covington said.

Instructors from the University of South Carolina’s School of Journalism and Mass Communications have been conducting workshops for the past five years at their campus in Columbia, S.C. and now, under a grant from the Department of Justice, instructors are taking the *Children in Jeopardy* course on the road. The course is free to sponsoring media organizations.

The seminar is a highly interactive workshop. It uses scenarios derived from actual cases to help the media better understand how they can assist law enforcement safeguard our kids as well as what to avoid that potentially could make these situations worse.

“I liked the scenarios and case studies,” said one participant. “The ability to discuss and bounce ideas off one another was helpful and informative. I also liked the discussion about writing releases challenging law enforcement to use less cop talk.”

“It gave a good perspective on the media side of reporting. It was very helpful in making AMBER easier to understand,” said another participant.

To register for the seminar, participants should return the attached registration form *by April 1, 2010*, to Carolyn Bevins at [Carolyn.bevins@ohioattorneygeneral.gov](mailto:Carolyn.bevins@ohioattorneygeneral.gov), or fax 1-866-639-7608.