

Ohio Amber Alert Steering Committee

www.ohioamberplan.org



Attorney General's Office–Missing Children Clearinghouse
Buckeye State Sheriff's Association
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Local/Regional AMBER Plan Representative
Ohio Association of Broadcasters

Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Emergency Management Agency
Ohio State Highway Patrol
State Emergency Communications Committee

Bob Taft, Governor

Victims' Advocate

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press release

OHIO'S AMBER ALERT PLAN CELEBRATES TWO-YEAR MILESTONE

(COLUMBUS) – The Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee today commended Ohio citizens, law enforcement, and media that have participated in Ohio's AMBER Alert Plan, launched two years ago. In 2004, Ohio issued 29 alerts at the local, regional or statewide level, aiding in the safe recovery of 31 children.

"I am proud of the AMBER Steering Committee's progress and its dedication to the recovery of missing Ohio children over the last two years," said Taft. "We know firsthand that AMBER Alert system in Ohio works, thanks to the hard work and vigilance of Ohio's citizens, law enforcement, and members of the media."

In January of 2003, Governor Bob Taft directed the Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee to coordinate and administer the statewide AMBER plan with local and regional plans, develop training and procedures for activation, and increase awareness through partnerships and education. Ohio's AMBER Alert Plan is a critical missing child response program that utilizes the resources of law enforcement and media to notify the public when children are kidnapped by predators. In April of 2004, the AMBER Alert Steering Committee launched new tools to enhance investigations and recovery efforts, including:

- ❖ Investigative checklist to help law enforcement correctly determine whether to issue an AMBER Alert;
- ❖ Media procedural checklist;
- ❖ Statewide AMBER Alert Plan website providing updated information (www.ohioamberplan.org);
- ❖ Toll-free number Ohioans can call to report tips to law enforcement and obtain information on active alerts (1-877-AMBER-OH);
- ❖ E-mail and fax notification system;
- ❖ Improvements to the AMBER Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) which disseminates photographs, images, and relevant information to law enforcement agencies, stakeholders and the public

In September of 2004, the Ohio AMBER Alert Steering Committee sponsored nine regional training sessions throughout the state. More than 850 law enforcement personnel, media representatives, emergency management agency staff, children services administrators and victims' advocates attended the workshops. Ohio was also recently awarded a \$77,000 grant provided by SBC Accelerator Program, which will assist in upgrades to the web site and Emergency Alert System equipment.

"Our goal is to bring every missing child home safely to their loved ones," said Mark Patchen, chair of the state of Ohio AMBER Steering Committee. "To meet that goal we will continue to provide updated training, information and resources to everyone involved in the AMBER Alert process."

**Ohio Amber Alert Steering Committee – 2855 West Dublin–Granville Road
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The AMBER Alert system is named for nine-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was abducted and murdered on January 13, 1996 in Arlington, Texas.

For tips on how to keep your children safe, log onto Ohio's AMBER Plan website at www.ohioamberplan.org and the website for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com.