

THE AMBER ADVOCATE

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Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

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2017

AMBER ALERT SYMPOSIUM

GATHERS AMBER ALERT COORDINATORS AND MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGERS

PATTY WETTERLING CHALLENGES AMBER ALERT PARTNERS TO NEVER GIVE UP HOPE

Patty Wetterling fought back tears while describing how she learned her son's body had been found after nearly three decades of searching and hoping he was still alive. On October 22, 1989, her eleven-year old son Jacob was riding his bike when he was taken by a masked gunman in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Wetterling shared her story with nearly 100 AMBER Alert Coordinators and Missing Person Clearinghouse Managers from the U.S., Canada and Mexico at the 2017 AMBER Alert Symposium held June 27-29, 2017, in Bloomington, Minnesota.

"We were alone," she said. "I knew nothing about law enforcement. I knew nothing about your world."

Wetterling was a stay-at-home mom when her son was abducted but soon became one of the nation's fiercest advocates for missing and abducted children, all the while continuing to search tirelessly for her son. Soft-spoken, yet amazingly strong, Patty shared with symposium participants important lessons learned in the 27 years through which she and her family persevered in the search for Jacob.



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2017 AMBER ALERT SYMPOSIUM



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Of the many lessons and insights shared, she explained how important it is to have a family spokesperson to talk to reporters, squelch rumors, keep the story alive and make sure all media outlets are treated fairly.

Wetterling emphasized that the victim's family needs to be asked the hard questions from the beginning to help with the investigation and build trust for the long term. She added that a multi-jurisdictional task force is critical when a child is abducted, and officers should leave their egos at the door when working on the task force.

"There is a problem of silos in law enforcement," said Wetterling. As she spoke about this issue and how law enforcement through training and preparedness, can overcome this dangerous barrier to swift and effective response in child abduction cases she emphasized, "It is not about you. It is about the child."

On September 1, 2016, Danny James Heinrich led investigators to the burial site of Jacob Wetterling and admitted to sexually assaulting and killing him. "You search for 27 years and eight days and it was over," said Wetterling. "I did not know where to go for what was next."

Wetterling plans to continue talking to law enforcement groups and others involved with missing and abducted child cases to help increase understanding about these cases and improve preparation for effective response; all in an effort to make things better the next time a child is taken.

She said Elizabeth Smart, Jaycee Dugard, Ben Ownby and Shawn Hornbeck should give every parent hope their missing child may come home. "Never give up. Ever. You cannot give up on these cases," said Wetterling.



FIVE YEAR REUNION

James Walters, AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) Administrator, welcomed new and familiar faces to the first AMBER Alert Symposium in five years. The symposium was presented by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Walters encouraged participants to take advantage of the more than 130 AATTAP classes that can be requested at no cost for customized delivery in their areas, as well as those training courses which can be completed online anytime 24/7. "There is no reason not to get AMBER Alert training," said Walters. "We need to go forward. We cannot go backwards."

Eileen Garry, Acting Administrator with OJJDP, remarked on the importance of com-

ing together, noting the symposium was designed to bring key AMBER Alert program partners together to foster coordination and collaboration. "We really do rely on you, the boots on the ground, who eat and breathe this every day," she said. "There is no issue stronger in my heart than the return of missing and abducted children."

NEW IN 2017

Dan Mills, NCMEC Training Program Manager, noted that 60 percent of all AMBER Alerts involve suspects who are family members. "Even though they are with a family member, this does not mean they are safe," said Mills. "You never stop searching until the child comes home."

NCMEC tracks all attempted abductions in the U.S. "A lot of abduction attempts are not successful on the first try," said Mills. "We can look for trends and patterns when a child is missing."

Mills explained that NCMEC offers a wealth of resources to help law enforcement, fami-

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FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



MASSACHUSETTS AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR WORKS HARD TO MAKE SURE EVERY ABDUCTED CHILD IS FOUND SAFE

Nicole Morell has worked for the Massachusetts State Police for 21 years and became the state's AMBER Alert coordinator in 2007. Sergeant Morell also worked with the Missing Persons Clearinghouse for three years. She previously worked as a detective for the Worcester County State Police Detective Unit and investigated major crimes, including the disappearance and murder of Molly Bish. Sergeant Morrell also worked as an undercover narcotics detective.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAMS SUCCESSFUL?

One of the unique aspects of our program is the cohesive partnership between the New England states and the importance these states place on holding annual meetings to build and maintain strong relationships among the coordinators. They allow each agency to gain knowledge and experience through past issued alerts and review of AMBER Alert plans and criteria.

Due to the cohesiveness of the Northeastern states; all states agreed that when an alert is confirmed or credible evidence exists that a suspect has crossed into another state, there will be no time delay in issuing the alert.

In terms of our partnership with media, our program met with the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association a few years ago to discuss best practices for an activa-

tion. As a result of the communication and understanding built from that effort, the media has not prematurely announced an alert and waits for our office to send them a press release advising them an alert has been activated.

Since the passing of the Missing Person/ AMBER Alert legislation, I have been a sitting member of the Missing Persons Task Force Committee. The task force discusses ways to improve missing person (juvenile) investigations.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTH OF YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS?

Funding and lack of manpower.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE? WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE PROGRAMS?

Combine all AMBER Alert and

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We are excited to continue this new feature in the AMBER Advocate Newsletter! With each issue, we will talk with AMBER Alert Partners, learning more about the men and women who work tirelessly to administer and continuously strengthen the AMBER Alert programs in their states. This quarter we talked with the AMBER Alert Coordinators for Massachusetts and Indiana.



INDIANA CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGER IS MOTIVATED TO BRING MISSING CHILDREN HOME

Shea Reliford has overseen the Indiana Clearinghouse for Missing Children & Missing Endangered Adults since September 2016. He is also a First Sergeant with the Office of Intelligence and Investigative Technologies and serves as the Administrative Officer for the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center. He began his career with the Indiana State Police in 2006. Previous duties include serving as a state trooper, police academy counselor and instructor, human resources sergeant, field training officer, recruiter, emergency vehicle operations instructor and background investigator.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAM(S) SUCCESSFUL?

The Indiana Clearinghouse is a section of our Fusion Center. When an AMBER Alert is requested, all resources necessary are deployed whether or not an AMBER Alert is actually activated. This includes analytical support from the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center, Public Information Office, Cybercrime & Investigative Technologies Section, Indiana Crimes against Children, K-9 and additional investigators and officers.

Our success is due to close relationships between the personnel involved with the decision making around an AMBER Alert. Our procedures and request forms are on our website for quick access. We educate law enforcement to call the clearinghouse as soon as possible and we can assist them with an AMBER Alert or any missing person situation.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTH OF YOUR CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAM?

Our number one issue is missing persons not being entered into NCIC immediately. Because AMBER Alerts do not occur frequently, agencies, officers and dispatchers are likely finding themselves involved with an alert for the first time; this inexperience with AMBER Alerts can sometimes cause a delay. We prefer agencies call us as soon as possible so we can assist them from the start to speed up the process.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE?

I would like to see a nationwide platform where other states can communicate with each other, and with a push of a few buttons all processes needed for an AMBER Alert to happen can be performed at the same time. Currently we use about five

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FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK

NICOLE MORELL, Continued from page 6

Clearinghouse programs. When the agencies are unified, they have so much more potential in helping to resolve missing children cases.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE. HOW DID THE AMBER ALERT AND OPERATIONS OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE SUPPORT THE OUTCOMES? WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED?

A homicide occurred in July 2011 in upstate New York. The New York State Police did not activate immediately but requested Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut to activate, which they did. During the after-action meeting, we discussed the importance of the requesting agency agreeing to activate as well. While an alert is not normally activated to locate a suspect wanted for fleeing from a crime scene, the requesting agency should issue an alert for several reasons: the abductor is the suspect in a homicide; the chance of a child

being harmed or murdered is heightened; and the child is considered to be in danger due to the police search, which could result in a motor vehicle pursuit or violence when the suspect is located.

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS AN AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR AND CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGER, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

Since the Massachusetts AMBER Alert program's inception in 2002, we have maintained a 100 percent success rate. I credit this to the investigative knowledge of our team, which consists of one full-time and two part-time coordinators with 30 years of collective investigative experience. Our team also has seven detective captains and majors from our Division of Investigative Services. Our team understands the importance of acting quickly but effectively to recover our most vulnerable population. ☺

SHEA RELIFORD, Continued from page 7

different entities to carry out all of the functions, including emails, phone calls and other software programs.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE. HOW DID THE AMBER ALERT AND OPERATIONS OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE SUPPORT THE OUTCOMES? WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED?

We activated the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) for the first time in September 2016, and law enforcement and the public were energized and very supportive in finding missing children. We also learned there would be backlash no matter what you do. We received questions

such as whether it is necessary to activate AMBER Alerts statewide or in the middle of the night. However, our goal is to bring missing children home safely and we have better success if we notify the public by all means available.

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS A CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGER, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

With the first AMBER Alert in which I was involved, both of the children were killed. I am committed to doing everything within my power to prevent that from happening again. ☺

2017 AMBER ALERT SYMPOSIUM

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lies and community members with missing and abducted child cases.

- A video to help searchers find missing children with autism
- Age progression photos that can be used when a child has been missing for an extended period of time
- Advanced forensic techniques to produce pictures of victims who are recovered deceased
- Team HOPE, a support group of volunteers who have experienced having a missing child
- Team Adam, a group of retired law enforcement officers who can provide expertise during a missing child case

Updates were provided on the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), the national warning system used to disseminate Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). On January 1, 2013, IPAWS began distributing AMBER Alerts to all cell phones in the geographical area of the abducted child.

Mark Lucero, IPAWS Engineering Chief, shared information on upcoming improvements for WEA.

- A fourth type of alert for public safety will now be issued in addition to AMBER Alerts and other alerts for national and extreme weather emergencies
- Hyperlinks to website addresses and phone numbers will be added in November 2017
- Messages will be available in Spanish in November 2018
- Message length will increase from 90 to 360 characters in May 2019

In discussing the composition of these messages and how IPAWS and WEA support them, Lucero noted how vital license plate numbers and vehicle descriptions are for issuing AMBER Alerts. He also emphasized how training which includes testing and

operation of IPAWS and related systems will promote stronger readiness the next time a child is taken. "Test, train, exercise and make mistakes," he said.

THE BIG PICTURE

Drew Evans, Superintendent of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, encouraged participants to review and refresh their AMBER Alert programs. "There is not one AMBER Alert call that I am not on pins and needles until I know what happened," said Evans. "It is hard to make incremental changes. I urge you to make your programs better."

Tracy Perzel, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, also challenged everyone to do more to bring children home safely. "Our job is to pursue those who hurt our children," she said. "It says a lot about our country if we do not protect our children."

"The AMBER Alert system is a crucial tool to quickly, loudly and wisely alert the public about the need for help. There is no other way to bring the power of observation from law enforcement and people going about their business," noted Perzel.

Louisiana Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager and AMBER Alert Coordinator Stacey Pearson summed up the symposium with these words: "The contacts we made these last three days and the relationships we have made will save more children."



AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH ILLUMINATES THE PATH TO PROTECTING CHILDREN IN INDIAN COUNTRY

It took only a few minutes for 10-year old Ashton Fish to express for everyone at the 2017 AMBER Alert Symposium, through both word and dance, why everything possible must be done to protect missing and abducted children in Indian Country.

"I want to be the voice for all the Indian children," said Fish. "I want the AMBER Alert to be on the reservation so none of our children can go missing, no one can steal our children and we won't be afraid to walk in the dark."

The young man then performed a traditional dance for all missing children. Fish first became aware of the issue of for Native American children when he heard about the abduction and murder of 11-year-old Ashlynnne Mike on the Navajo Reservation in May 2016. Fish created a YouTube video (https://youtu.be/vStdad1zq_g) to perform a dance in honor of Ashlynnne

Mike and to plead for all parents to watch over their children.

"I have been called by the Spirits to come around here and dance for Ashlynnne Mike and all the other stolen kids," said Fish on the video. "I dedicate this song for all the children, the aunts who are sad. Aho!"

Fish is a member of the Assiniboine Nation and traveled from Blackfoot, Idaho, to speak and dance at the symposium. His mother, Kristen Low Dog, said her son's dancing is a good way for Native Americans to combat this problem because it involves their own culture and ways.

"He is very spiritually mature and voices his opinion out," said Low Dog. "He has a big heart and he wants to do what he can to help."

The artistry of Ashton's expression of dance, combined with the wisdom of his words and vision for AMBER Alert's protection of children on tribal lands, left symposium participants eager to meet this young man and shake his hand following the presentation.

Ashton and his mother presented AATTAP Program Administrator Jim Walters with a handmade ceremonial quilt in honor of his work with AMBER Alert and Child Protection in Indian Country.



“Grown men can learn from very little children for the hearts of the little children are pure.”

-Black Elk, Oglala Lakota Sioux (1863-1950)

CHALLENGES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

AATTAP director Jim Walters has been working for years to help bring training and resources to Indian Country. Although much has been accomplished, he said most tribes do not have what is needed to slow the tide of missing and abducted children from their communities.

“Child abductions are down in the U.S. with one exception, and that is in Indian Country,” said Walters. “Children in Indian Country are especially vulnerable.”

Walters emphasized the problem of lacking data on missing and abducted children from tribal lands, noting the actual numbers are unknown because no federal or Native American agency is collecting that information.

Walters cited the murder of Ashlynn Mike as a tragic example of the challenges being faced in Indian Country. When Ashlynn was first discovered missing on May 3, 2016, her brother ran two-and-a-half miles to find a car with a phone—but the phone did not work. Twelve hours into the investigation, authorities were still unclear whether the state or the tribe should issue an AMBER Alert.

“Our priority is to save lives,” said Walters. “We can work out the jurisdictional issues later.”

The Navajo Nation is now working with Arizona and Utah to improve the AMBER Alert program on the reservation.

Walters offered other examples of unique challenges in Indian Country.

- The unique history of cultural intervention and jurisdictional complexities
- High turnover and lack of staffing
- Lack of understanding of Indian Child

Welfare laws

- Use of the internet to lure Native American children away from their homes, yet these children are most often reported as runaways

Ashlynn Mike’s case did bring to light one very strong feature of Native American communities - they have the best trackers in the world. Walters gave examples of the superior skill and coordination tribal law enforcement and community members demonstrate when conducting searches. He discussed other child protection efforts and collaborative approaches that can help make a difference in Native American community efforts to prevent child exploitation and abduction.

- Needs assessments should and will continue to be conducted in more than 100 Native American communities
- State and community strategies with strong leadership from the tribal government must be developed
- Child Abduction Response Teams (CARTs) comprised of tribal, state and federal agencies should be championed, developed and maintained
- Prevention education in elementary schools and additional training for law enforcement should be developed as a key component of a comprehensive child protection strategy

“Children are a precious resource,” said Walters. “We have to take a tribal approach where every member is responsible for the community. We want to assure the victim’s family and community that all resources are utilized in the successful recovery of a child.”

More information about child protection resources available for Indian Country can be found at the Tribal Database website – <https://www.tribaldatabase.org>.

AMBER ALERT ON THE FRONT LINES:



IT TAKES TWO: TENNESSEE AND GEORGIA WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE ABDUCTED GIRL

On June 6, 2017, a 14-year-old girl with a history of suicide attempts and other mental health problems went missing in Georgia. The Gordon County, Georgia, Sheriff's Office received a call at 11 a.m. from the girl's mother and reported she saw her daughter the night before, but she was gone when she went to look for her in the morning.

Detectives discovered surveillance video of the girl at a hotel in Calhoun, Georgia. They also learned she left with an adult male and female she had met through social media in a blue 2017 Subaru Impreza. The Sheriff's Office contacted the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) about the alleged kidnapping and the possible issuance of an AMBER Alert.

"I was worried for the welfare of the child and began reviewing what else could be done to recover her," said Georgia AMBER

Alert Coordinator Brad Parks.

"I was also concerned about the mental health of the victim and the fact adults traveled from outside the state to remove her from her medical care," added Georgia Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager Emily Butler.

Georgia issued an AMBER Alert at 4:30 p.m. on June 6, 2017. The alert updated notified law enforcement, media and social media platforms, and was posted on transportation signs. Data on the suspects' vehicle was also placed into license plate recognition cameras.

The GBI also asked the Tennessee Bureau of Identification (TBI) to issue an AMBER Alert, as the agency had cell phone information indicating the victim and suspects were traveling to that state.

Tennessee AMBER Alert Coordinator Margie Quin explained that Tennessee, under its AMBER Alert plan, is able to issue an alert for another state after answering two questions: "It has to meet our criteria," she said. "There also has to be a nexus to Tennessee; we have a reason to believe they are here, or coming here."

The Loudon County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department began pursuing the suspects' vehicle after they spotted a reckless driver. At 10:30 p.m., the 14-year-old victim was found safe in the vehicle with no injuries. Deputies took the female driver and male passenger into custody.

"I think anytime a child is found quickly after an AMBER Alert is issued, that is evidence the system works," said Quin.

Everyone involved in this case believes cooperation and relationships were key factors in making this AMBER Alert work.

"The TBI and GBI have really close relationships. We work together and we meet with each other," added Quin. "This is not just a telephone relationship. When you have a critical relationship, it is not going to take an hour to find the right person to talk to and get things done really quickly."

"The aspect of established contacts with individuals within state agencies is priceless," added Parks. "It is important to have the ability to directly contact the people who can respond without any 'red tape' or lag time."



Parks and Quin urge all AMBER Alert partners to get to know their counterparts in other states. "Do not wait to establish working relationships with surrounding states," said Parks. "Have those numbers, names and processes ready and accessible."

"Know who to call," added Quin. "Time saves lives." 🍷

"The TBI and GBI have really close relationships. We work together and we meet with each other. This is not just a telephone relationship. When you have a critical relationship, it is not going to take an hour to find the right person to talk to and get things done really quickly. Know who to call. Time saves lives."

-Tennessee AMBER Alert Coordinator Margie Quin

"The aspect of established contacts with individuals within state agencies is priceless. It is important to have the ability to directly contact the people who can respond without any 'red tape' or lag time."

-Georgia AMBER Alert Coordinator Brad Parks

AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL

THE AMBER ALERT ACCORD: SYMPOSIUM AIMS TO ERASE BORDERS WHEN CHILDREN ARE ABDUCTED

Representatives from the U.S., Canada and Mexico are working to make sure the AMBER Alert systems in their countries and bordering areas work seamlessly when cross-border child abduction cases occur. The 2017 AMBER Alert Symposium included a panel discussion about what is being done to return abducted children who are taken across a national border.

Blanca Margarita Niebla Cárdenas is the director of the National AMBER Alert program in Mexico. She worked with the AATTAP Southern Border Initiative to start the child abduction alert in Mexico in 2012. She said AMBER Alerts are saving lives in Mexico because everyone cooperates.

“We try to create an AMBER Alert culture so it is contagious and everyone is involved in finding children,” said Cardenas. “We are committed to families who are suffering because their child is missing.”

Mexico issues local, regional and national AMBER Alerts. The one noticeable difference in Mexico’s program is that AMBER Alerts are issued only for children under age 16. Canada has had AMBER Alert programs in all of its provinces since 2002. In 2009, Canada created a national AMBER Alert working group to provide more coordination, training and technology for all agencies. A protocol was also created to work with all U.S. border-states.

Julie Morel is a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Corporal with the National Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Division. She would like to streamline the process

when Canada contacts the U.S. about a cross-border child abduction case. “We are working to have a better system so we have a one-stop number for Canada available, so these lead agencies can be more closely involved.”

Maranda Everson, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Border Patrol Agent, agreed cooperation with Canada and Mexico is key to resolving child abduction cases quickly. She said her Mexican and Canadian counterparts have been great at inspecting all vehicles entering and leaving the country.

Stacy Pearson is the Louisiana Missing Persons Clearing House Manager and AMBER Alert Coordinator. Even though Louisiana is not a border state, she said she has had numerous missing person cases from Canada - even though the state is closer to Mexico. “We do not pay attention to borders,” said Pearson, emphasizing that all cases are given swift attention. “We are all going to work together and establish our own recovery railroad to return children home.”

INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL ABDUCTIONS

More parents kidnap their children from the U.S. than any other country in the world, according to Anna McGahuey, an officer with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Children’s Issues. The State Department received reports of 446 parental abductions involving 629 children during 2016; yet McGahuey believes the number is much higher.

“That is a lot of children but it is likely two or three times that many because parents do not know about us,” said McGahuey.

The U.S. and 82 other countries follows the Hague Convention’s standards of practices for custody cases. McGahuey spoke about the important features of the Hague Convention, noting rules recognizing the child’s habitual residence rather than a sole focus on citizenship.

“If a non-documented person calls our office we will help them,” she said. “In this office, citizenship is blind. Whatever works to recover the child is important to me.”

REACTION FROM INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

AMBER Alert partners from Canada and Mexico said the symposium offered an invaluable experience. Winnipeg Police Service Sergeant Darryl Ramkissoon said he will take valuable lessons home. “I would like to build a better working relationship with other organizations in Canada,” he said. “We need to break down the borders like the U.S. has done in their states.”

Andrea Scott is a Detective and also works for the Winnipeg Police Service. “It is great to learn we all have similar issues but that we are all working together with the same goal, which is bringing kids home and preventing them from going missing.”

Blanca Margarita Niebla Cárdenas said the symposium was a very important way to meet with her counterparts in the other countries. “My objective is that we have a clear path to communicate with the U.S. and Canada,” said Cardenas. “We want to work like there are no borders.”



AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



FEDERAL LEGISLATION WOULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR AMBER ALERTS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Federal lawmakers are considering the “The AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2017.” The act would make tribes eligible for Department of Justice grants for developing and implementing AMBER Alert communication plans on Tribal lands. The bipartisan legislation is in response to the 2016 fatal abduction of 11-year-old Ashlynnne Mike on the Navajo Nation. The case raised questions about gaps in communication and coordination between tribal and local law enforcement. The standing legislative committee of the Navajo Nation voted in July to support the measure. Learn more at <https://www.tribaldatabase.org>. ↪



CONFERENCE ON MISSING PERSONS HELD IN ATLANTA

The 11th Annual National Conference on Responding to Missing and Unidentified Persons was held September 19-21, 2017, in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference included presentations from Missing Children Society of Canada CEO Amanda Pick, missing children’s advocate Patty Wetterling and FirstNet National Tribal Government Liaison Carl Rebstock. ↪



DELAWARE BASEBALL CLINIC RAISES AMBER ALERT AWARENESS

The Wilmington Blue Rocks in Delaware held a baseball clinic on August 20, 2017, distributing information about internet safety and child ID kits that can be used to provide information for an AMBER Alert and all missing child incidents. The Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children and the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation also hosted the event. ↪



MISSOURI GOVERNOR SIGNS LAW CREATING BLUE ALERT

Missouri Governor Eric Greitens signed a bill into law in July 2017 creating a Blue Alert system for the state. The Blue Alert sends out emergency notices to quickly finding suspects accused of shooting police officers. The bill was a response to the multiple police officers who have been shot in Missouri in the past year. Governor Greitens noted that 27 other states now have Blue Alerts. ↪

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