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NEWS

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Illinois AMBER Alert Announcement

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Governor George H. Ryan today announced details of a new program aimed at recovering abducted and endangered children. The program is modeled after a National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) initiative called "America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert Plan."

The AMBER Plan establishes a coordinated system for Illinois law enforcement agencies to utilize the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) Emergency Alert System (EAS) in voluntary cooperation by broadcasters to quickly inform the public about an abducted child and the available facts regarding the alleged abductor. The EAS is directly linked to radio and television stations in Illinois. Local police may activate the alert by contacting the Illinois State Police (ISP) when a child is abducted who is under 16-years-old or has a proven mental or physical disability and is believed to be in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

"The abduction of a child is one of society's cruelest crimes," Governor Ryan said. "This plan involves a partnership with Illinois law enforcement, IEMA, and broadcasters that will no doubt make our communities safer for our children."

Legislation signed into law last August mandated the ISP to develop and implement a coordinated emergency alert plan which could make information regarding abducted and endangered children immediately available to the citizens of Illinois. The program development was a collaborative effort between the ISP, IEMA, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Sheriff's Association, and representatives from the St. Louis Area Regional Abduction Alert (SARAA) committee. "We cannot have enough tools available to help us recover abducted and endangered children," ISP Director Sam W. Nolen said. "The quicker information about an abduction gets out, the better the chance of a child's safe return."

The AMBER alert program was initiated in Texas following the abduction and murder of nine-year-old Amber Hagerman in 1996.