



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2003

Missing Children's Day 2003

"LIGHT THE WAY HOME" For Our Missing Children

SPRINGFIELD, IL -- The Illinois State Police will join citizens throughout the state to observe May 25 as Missing Children's Day in Illinois. The day is an opportunity for family and friends to plan events in their communities to raise public awareness about the serious issue of missing children.

In Illinois, there are currently 2,320 missing children. Locating and safely returning these children to their homes is a statewide objective. "Parents are strongly encouraged to take the extra steps necessary to protect our most valuable asset. The children of today are tomorrow's future, and their protection and safety must be one of our highest priorities," stated Larry G. Trent, Director of the Illinois State Police. "In addition to the already existing crimes against children, parents must also be aware of the serious additional threat of Internet technology and assume control of their children's activities while allowing them to take advantage of the advances in technology," he said.

In January 2002, the Illinois State Police implemented the America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert Notification Plan as a quick and efficient way to notify the public and law enforcement when an abduction has taken place. When activated, an AMBER Alert notifies Illinois law enforcement of the specific information regarding the abduction of a child whose life may be in danger.

Additionally, Illinois, in a partnership with Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, and Wisconsin, is active in the Interstate Agreement on Missing and Exploited Children. The agreement was established as a network to improve identifying and recovering missing children.

Governor Blagojevich has proclaimed May 25, 2004, as Missing Children's Day in Illinois. Citizens are encouraged to take part in the day's observance by turning on porch lights and vehicle headlights to "LIGHT THE WAY HOME" for our missing children.