

THE AMBER ADVOCATE

ISSUE 2 2021

**AMBER ALERT PARTNERS
SHARE THEIR GRATITUDE FOR
JIM WALTERS' LEADERSHIP**



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ALERT**

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Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

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GRATITUDE FOR JIM WALTERS' LEADERSHIP



During a virtual celebration, participants shared how Walters provided valuable guidance, support and insights to them, and so many others, during his nearly 7 years as AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program Administrator

When Jim Walters looks back at all the accomplishments he made while he was the program administrator for AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP), his biggest feat may be fulfilling a promise to a distraught mother. Walters pledged to Pamela Foster to make a real difference in helping missing and abducted children in Indian Country after her daughter was abducted and murdered.

Ashlynnne Mike was kidnapped and killed May 2, 2016, near Shiprock on the Navajo Nation Reservation. The case highlighted gaps in public safety preparedness and coordination for tribal children across the country.

Walters worked with Foster to pass the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act in April 2018. The new federal law supports integration

of tribal AMBER Alert plans with state plans and provided grants to help tribes improve communications and responses for missing and abducted children in Indian Country.

“What I have enjoyed most about working with Jim is his kindness and compassion,” said Foster. “I felt like I was with a superhero when my world was falling apart. He believed in me to make changes for a better tomorrow, for our native children. I could not have done what I did without his help.”

Before Walters became the program administrator, he had overseen the AMBER Alert in Indian Country Initiative (AIIC) for ten years; and for six years during that same time period he also headed the Southern Border Initiative (SBI), coordinating child abduction recovery

Continued on next page

GRATITUDE FOR JIM WALTERS' LEADERSHIP

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efforts in Mexico and U.S. border states. "Tribes face a number of challenges; ones most of us don't consider on a day-to-day basis," said Walters. "I remember this officer who told me how the training really helped when an AMBER Alert was issued. I believe drawing on the right resources and improving the speed and efficiency of their response can make the difference between the safe recovery of children - or losing them."

Walters officially retired as program administrator for the AMBER Alert program in February 2021, but said his heart will never be far from its people—especially the children. During his tenure, Walters expanded efforts with Child Abduction Response Team (CART) training, AICC, SBI, and provided important leadership with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, guiding all aspects of AATTAP as staff and associates worked to swiftly create additional modes for training and technical assistance delivery, including virtual, live instructor-led training (VILT), virtual meetings for regional and state-level events, and increased marketing toward greater awareness of AATTAP's existing on-demand, self-paced eLearning courses and recorded webinars.

Those who have worked with Walters on the AICC Initiative say his work to help tribes has been unparalleled.

"Jim elevated tribal nations to the level where they could receive education and training to protect their children," said Tyesha Wood, AICC Project Coordinator. "He

is the wind beneath my wings."

"Thank you so much Jim for all you do for Indian Country," added Chelsa Seciwa, AATTAP-NCJTC Project Specialist. "God bless you. May our Creator watch over you."

Those remarks were given during a 'surprise' online farewell tribute, held February 19 via Zoom. AMBER Alert partners from around the country gathered to offer their thoughts and thanks to Walters.

Janell Rasmussen joined AATTAP as its new program Administrator in February, working with Walters to transition into the new role. She brings to the position nearly 20 years of experience through her coordination of the Minnesota AMBER Alert Program and related child protection work with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Rasmussen helped launch the AMBER Alert program in Minnesota in 2002, serving as the state coordinator while also supervising the state Missing Persons Clearinghouse for 16 years.

Rasmussen also brings with her the experience and insights of having collaborated with other AMBER Alert partners and AATTAP for many years through state-level training, regional events, and national networking at AATTAP symposium gatherings. Most recently, she served as AATTAP's Region 3 Liaison before accepting the program administrator position. Rasmussen is the third program administrator since Phil Keith led the US Department of Justice's launch of AATTAP in 2004.



Janell Rasmussen, AATTAP Program Administrator

Rasmussen expressed her gratitude for Walters' work with AMBER Alert. "Thank you for your dedication to protecting kids and for your work with the AMBER Alert program," she said. "Your passion for the AMBER Alert Program will live on through your team and the partners that have come together to protect kids as a result of your work. We will make you proud."

Not surprisingly, Walters said the credit goes to everyone who supported him. "None of this happened because of me," he said. "It was every one of you that made this happen. You have a very special place in my heart for what you have done for the families we serve." 🍷

Here is a sampling of some others remarks from AMBER Alert Partners for Jim Walters:

"Thank you for your genuine heart and your leadership. You certainly paved the way and will leave a legacy for so many." *Yesenia Leon-Baron, Region 1 AATTAP Liaison*

"We're seeing a lot of good things happen with the AMBER Alert program across the board and you're responsible for making us all shine." *Derek VanLuchene, AATTAP CART Program Coordinator*

"Jim really stresses the importance of teamwork and the common goal - to recover a missing child and reunite a family." *Beth Alberts, Texas Center for the Missing CEO*

"Jim's commitment to child safety is unmatched. His contributions to the AMBER Alert program and his extensive training of law enforcement and other child-serving professionals has certainly made this world a safer place for children." *John E. Bischoff III, NCMEC Missing Children Division VP*

"I enjoy Jim's passion. He makes you feel like you are his best friend and that you are important to him." *Regina Chacon, New Mexico AMBER Alert Coordinator*

"I enjoy Jim's sense of humor, his compassion and willingness to support others." *Helen Connolly, NCJTC-FVTC Associate*

"I have enjoyed and will remember Jim most for his professionalism and dedication to everything he does." *Byron Fassett, JCJTC-AATTAP Program Manager*

"Jim is a 'go to' person for knowledge and experience; we will definitely miss having him here." *Carri Gordon, AATTAP Region 5 Liaison*

"Jim is a legend in the AMBER Alert/missing children/child protection community. His energy, ideas and passion uplifts all of us working in the field when we need it most." *Amanda Leonard, Hawaii Missing Children's Center Coordinator*

"Jim has a huge heart and really cares about the people he works with and teaches. I will miss his smiling face, his encouraging manner and his humor." *Cindy Neff, New York Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager*

"Jim has a lot of great ideas and isn't afraid to try things that we don't typically do." *Jill Nysse, NCJTC-AATTAP Project Coordinator*

"It's something special to have colleagues you can work with so easily and joyfully, which we are lucky to see a lot of in the AMBER Community, especially with Jim." *Carly Tapp, NCMEC Program Specialist*

AMBER ALERT ON THE FRONT LINES:

Minnesota grandmother uses birdwatching skills to save child in AMBER Alert

The premise of the movie “Gone in 60 Seconds” is that cars can be stolen in a minute or less. Unfortunately, that short time frame was the real-life situation after a mother left her one-year-old son in the back of her vehicle to grab something from their Minneapolis, Minnesota, home before leaving.

At 12:21 p.m. on February 6, 2021, the mother’s white Jeep Grand Cherokee was taken with her baby still inside. The Minneapolis Police Department contacted the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) at 12:52 p.m. about issuing an AMBER Alert.



Janell Twardowski, Minnesota AMBER Alert Coordinator

“The situation met Minnesota’s AMBER Alert criteria for a stranger abduction, so the BCA quickly worked with the Minneapolis Police Department to gather the information and issue an alert,” said Janell Twardowski, Minnesota AMBER Alert Coordinator.

BCA issued the AMBER Alert at 1:49 p.m. through the Minnesota Crime Alert Network, Wireless Emergency Alert, and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Under the Minnesota plan, the EAS messages are broadcast on radio and television and a Crime Alert is distributed to media outlets statewide.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are sent to all compatible cellphones in Minnesota. The alert is also shared on social media and goes to electronic highway signs and billboards. “It was winter in Minnesota; the weather added a heightened concern with the low temperatures that day,” added Twardowski.

The AMBER Alert was heard and seen by thousands of Minnesota residents, including Barbara Gusse. She saw the alert on her phone while she was feeding the birds outside her Brooklyn Center home.

Gusse grabbed her birdwatching binoculars and focused on a SUV that had been idling for about 20 minutes at a church parking lot across the street. She checked the license plates and discovered the plate was an exact match with the vehicle in the AMBER Alert.

Gusse contacted the police at 2:40 p.m. Seven minutes later, police confirmed the child was safe and asked for the alert to be canceled.

WCCO reporter Justin DeRusha interviewed Gusse shortly after the child was found. DeRusha's cellphone interview was shared on Twitter and has since gone viral with more than 300,000 views. "I was crying," Gusse said. "I'm just so happy. I could hear that little thing crying when they opened the door. I'm just glad he's OK."

Gusse said she is not a hero—just a grandmother of nine who wanted to make sure the child was safe. The Minnesota AMBER Alert Coordinator said Gusse's actions played a significant role in the safe recovery of the child.

"Her keen awareness to notice the vehicle parked in her neighborhood and quick actions to notify authorities were remarkable and were exactly what we ask the public to do when an AMBER Alert is issued," said Twardowski.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey was so impressed with what happened he named February 9, 2021, as "Barbara Gusse Day." The mayor posted his delivery of the proclamation on [Facebook](#).

"You are that important to our city," said Mayor Frey. "You certainly saved a life and you should be honored. We as a city are eternally grateful for (your) attentiveness and swift action that led to the heartwarming end of a terrifying day."

Minnesota's AMBER Alert Plan has been operational since 2002. BCA has issued 39 AMBER Alerts as of May 1, 2021. Minnesota's AMBER Alert Program has established many partnerships that provide resources to disseminate AMBER Alert information as quickly as possible throughout Minnesota.

Twardowski said training and preparedness are instrumental when issuing an AMBER Alert. Each alert is different she said, so continuous education and training is needed to ensure AMBER Alerts are activated smoothly and effectively.

"The AMBER Alert Plan worked just as it is meant to work," said Twardowski. "Working with our partners and the public to find missing and abducted children is rewarding work. I am honored to be part of the AMBER Alert Program in Minnesota." 🌸



Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey presents Barbara Gusse with the "Barbara Gusse Day" proclamation

AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Walking in Remembrance of Ashlynnne Mike

Contributed by Pamela Foster, mother of Ashlynnne



In Our Hearts

*We thought of you today.
But that is nothing new.
We thought about you
yesterday.
And days before that too.
We think of you in silence.
We often speak your name.
Now all we have memories.
And your picture in a frame.
Your memory is our keepsake.
With which we'll never part.
God has you in his keeping.
We have you in our hearts.*

Author – Unknown

May 2, 2021, will mark five years since the abduction of my children Ashlynnne and Ian Mike. Ian was at a tender age of 9 and still very young and spent a majority of his time cementing his relationship with his sister. Ashlynnne was 11 and she was in the “in-between” years of 9 and 12 and was flourishing as she moved through her childhood. I was blessed with two amazing children and life was just about as perfect as it could be. I'm not sure how to begin the story of the abduction of my children, but I can say we were “not ready” for the shock that occurred that day.

On the morning of May 2, 2016, Ian and Ashlynnne woke up like

any other morning, they got dressed for school, gave a round of morning hugs and off they went to school not knowing the terror that awaited them. My children were abducted after school from their school bus stop and my sweet angel never made it home.

Since that horrific day, I became my children's advocate, fought for justice, and raised awareness about the lack of AMBER Alert programs across Indian Country. With hard work from so

many dedicated leaders who saw the loop hole in the system, we were able to pass the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2018 on April 13, 2018.

I am elated we now have the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country program, a life-saving system for our indigenous children and their families. Tears flow down my cheeks because I am so passionate about making a change, and the very source of my movement started from the grassroots. Not sure if I'd get this far, I put all my faith in Ashlynnne and the universe. My angel was with me in spirit every step of the way.

Since the tragedy, we remember Ashlynnne with an annual walk. Unfortunately, we were not able to gather this year with each other like last year. Because the spirit of the walk is important to us, this year we met virtually.

On May 2, 2021, we honored Ashlynnne and our thoughts were with our beautiful angel. A time to commemorate her life, a day in which we give so much respect to her. Although she is no longer with us, she is still moving mountains and her spirit still lives on. There's always a special feel in the air when I'm working and doing things for her and I know she is with me/us. We love her dearly; she has touched the lives of so many people during her short time on earth. Eleven beautiful years filled with cherished memories, and they are kept safe in our hearts.

By commemorating this day to Ashlynnne, we remember the times we shared together, celebrations from her birth to her death, and all the milestones in between. We will never forget those precious moments, the twinkle in her eyes, the sound of her laughter. ☺

South Dakota creates office for missing Indigenous person cases

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem signed a bill establishing an office for missing and murdered indigenous persons. The law establishes an investigator to analyze data involving Native American cases and create a program to prevent future abductions. The bill has strong support from tribal leaders. 🍷

Oklahoma considering law to help missing and murdered Indigenous people

Some Oklahoma lawmakers are seeking enactment of the Kasey Alert Act to address the problem of missing and murdered Native Americans. The bill is named after 26-year-old Kasey Russell who went missing five years ago. The law would enable law enforcement to send out an emergency message to phones and road safety signs, similar to an AMBER Alert, for adults ages 18 to 59 who are believed to be in danger. Last year, Oklahoma passed Ida's Law, which makes investigating missing and murdered Indigenous women easier for law enforcement. 🍷

Wyoming issues report on missing and murdered Native Americans

A new report finds Wyoming's Indigenous residents have a disproportionately higher homicide rate than the general population. Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon created the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Task Force in 2012 and assigned the group to address the barriers for investigating and helping victims. The report finds Indigenous people make up less than 3% of Wyoming's population, yet account for 21% of homicide victims. These rates are also higher than the national average.

Tribal communities identified three key barriers to consistent reporting and response to cases.

- Lack of trust in law enforcement and/or the judicial process.
- Absence of a single point of contact among law enforcement, agencies and communities to help families navigate the system.
- Perceived lack of information concerning the timely progress of an investigation or judicial proceeding. 🍷

FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT

Maryland Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager takes personal experience as a runaway to find missing children



Carla Proudfoot, Maryland Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager

Carla Proudfoot has been with the Maryland Center for Missing and Unidentified Persons since October 1985. She is the state's Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager and assisted in the creation and implementation of the Maryland AMBER Alert Program in August 2002.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR AMBER ALERT/MISSING PERSONS PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES IT SUCCESSFUL?

Our AMBER Alert plan is only activated by the Maryland State Police on behalf of other police agencies in the state. We strive to get the alert out as quickly as possible; we have timed the process, and have seen dissemination within eight minutes. I think having one entity issuing, vetting the information, and making the decision makes it happen very quickly. Only the AMBER Alert coordinators make the decision, based on each case meeting the criteria.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO FIND MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

I ran away when I was 12. I vividly remember what it was like. In my opinion, it seems as though the "runaway" is not a concern for the general public, unless it's their child. These children need help, and they don't get any.

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

Unfortunately, the one I remember most was the first one, but it did not end well. The child was deceased before the parent ever reported the child missing. Most of our success stories are because of issuing the AMBER Alert. The abductor sees the alert and leaves the child somewhere, or contacts the police or reporting person.

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

I am very passionate in getting help for the kids falling through the cracks. Sometimes too passionate. In 36 years, I've seen some change, but not nearly enough. I have been saying for too many years that the kids need help now, the current system in place is not helping. No one wants to provide money to help, but if they don't receive some help, we will be paying for them in the future when they are part of our homeless population or dealing with HIV, drug or alcohol addiction, etc.

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

I would like the AMBER Alert and the Silver Alert to be the only alerts. The more alerts there are, the less likely people will pay them any attention.

HOW HAS TRAINING HELPED YOU IN AMBER ALERT CASES?

I believe it has helped that the AMBER Alert plans are similar and share much the same criteria. Meeting and working with other state coordinators has assisted us in cases where the child has been taken to another state. We know them, they know us, and as a result we meet with very little opposition in gaining assistance.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER AMBER ALERT PARTNERS?

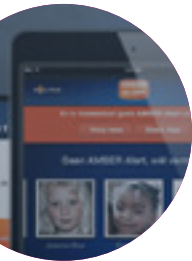
Stick to the criteria, and keep politics out of it as much as possible. Remember the reason for the alert is to save a child's life.

Explore AATTAP's course offerings today: Download our current T/TA Catalog

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Program brings you a wide variety of training opportunities to improve the investigative response of local, regional, state, and tribal law enforcement to high-risk victims, children in crisis and the commercial sexual exploitation of youth.



AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



Netherlands to stop AMBER Alerts and start using different public notifications

Law enforcement authorities in the Netherlands plan to replace AMBER Alert and Missing Child Alert notifications in July with a separate citizen warning system called Burgernet. Minister of Justice and Security Ferd Grapperhaus said the change will create a more coherent, centralized service for warnings about criminal suspects as well as missing adults and children.

AMBER Alert Europe President and Founder Frank Hoen believes the switch is a mistake. "When the term 'AMBER Alert' is mentioned people know that a missing child is in danger," he said. "We are gravely worried that with the disappearance of the AMBER Alert, the collaboration between the public and the police will also vanish."

AMBER Alert Netherlands estimates 95 percent of the Dutch public knows about the purpose of the AMBER Alert. Since November 2008, the Netherlands issued 30 AMBER Alerts and 1,010 Missing Child Alerts. The missing children were found safe in 94 percent of cases, often with the assistance of the public. 🍷



Canadian man charged for nearly causing false AMBER Alert

A 49-year-old Fergus, Ontario, man is facing multiple charges for calling police to report his car had been stolen with his child inside. Officers say they found the man's vehicle and the child after putting out a notice on social media, and in the midst of preparing an AMBER Alert. 🍷



Canadian police chiefs endorse new missing child search network

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is endorsing a new search network to help in high-risk missing children investigations. The Missing Children Society of Canada's (MCSC) Child Search Network provides police with the ability to share information and collaborate with one another and the public to help find high-risk missing children who do not meet the AMBER Alert criteria. The system has a database with real-time details about missing children cases. A date for release of the network is pending. 🍷

AMBER Alert Europe teams with company to identify online threats to children

AMBER Alert Europe has joined ActiveFence to scan millions of online chats to identify online threats to protect children from sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other endangerment. The system proactively monitors numerous online platforms to identify, track, and stop online threats. 🌟



Croatia partners with AMBER Alert Europe to protect missing children

AMBER Alert Europe welcomed the Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Croatia (CNZD) in February 2021, making it the 41st official organization from 25 countries to aid in the search for missing children in Europe. The CZND is a leading organization in Croatia devoted to preventing the disappearance of children and providing support to families in crisis situations. 🌟



International cold case organization now helping European families with missing children

The International Cold Case Analysis Project is teaming up with the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (PEN-MP) of AMBER Alert Europe. The collaboration will also include Locate International, the Police Academy of Lower Saxony, and several British and Australian Universities. The project enables young police officers and students to establish a close link between theory and practice in cold cases. The goal is to help families across Europe find closure after the disappearance of a loved one. The project has already help bring in leads about a 1991 murder in Germany. 🌟



WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING ABOUT AATTAP'S VIRTUAL, LIVE INSTRUCTOR-LED TRAINING: CLICK TO SEE VIRTUAL COURSE OFFERINGS.

"I loved how we were able to interact. This is the first of this kind of training I've been to and it kept me active and motivated."

"I can't believe these courses are offered for free. This training was very professionally put together and the most engaging web-based course I have taken. I appreciated the quality and variety of instructors and the depth of knowledge they provided."

Initial Response Strategies and Tactics When responding to Missing Children Incidents / Virtual Training / February 2021



AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



COLORADO ADDS LINK TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION FOR AMBER ALERTS

Colorado is the latest state to add a URL link to offer more details for AMBER and Blue Alerts. The links on the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) go to a Twitter site with additional details beyond the 360-character limits on wireless messages. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation tested the system before using the links in actual alerts. ↪



TENNESSEE PASSES SEVERAL LAWS INVOLVING MISSING PERSONS

Tennessee will require parents to report missing children after two days, or face increased penalties. “Evelyn’s Law” goes into effect on July 1, 2021, and also requires parents to notify law enforcement within 24 hours if a missing child is 12-years-old or younger. The law was passed after the mother of 15-month-old Evelyn Boswell did not notify law enforcement that their daughter was missing until months later. The mother was charged after the child was found two and a half weeks later.

Tennessee’s Holly Bobo Act is now in effect which raises the age limit for missing person alerts. The law increases the age limit from 18 to 21 to notify the public for an endangered missing person.

State legislators are also considering a Silver Alert to notify the public for missing and vulnerable adults. Alzheimer’s Tennessee is lobbying legislators for issuance of an alert for missing adults with dementia, disabilities, or impairments. ↪



WASHINGTON HOPES NEW WEBSITE WILL HELP FIND GIRL MISSING FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES

The Washington State Patrol’s Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit is hoping a new website will help locate a girl who was four years old when she went missing 18 years ago. The newest Homeward Bound Trucks message features Sofia Juarez who went missing from her Kennewick home shortly before her fifth birthday. ↪



MINNESOTA MOTHER CHARGED FOR FALSE AMBER ALERT

A St. Paul, Minnesota, woman has been charged after police issued an AMBER Alert when she allegedly told police her daughter had been taken in her stolen car. On February 28, the woman called 911 to report her car had been stolen with her two-year-old daughter inside. Authorities found the child safe and say the woman admitted to lying to try to get her ex-boyfriend out of her life. ↪

TEXAS LEGISLATORS CONSIDER ALERT FOR MASS SHOOTINGS

The Texas House of Representatives passed a bill to create a state active shooter alert. The law would allow law enforcement to issue an alert to notify the public of an active shooter in their area. The law was prompted by a shooting on August 31, 2019, when a man killed eight people, including himself, and wounded 25 others. ☺



WISCONSIN AND FLORIDA LAWMAKERS PROMOTE PURPLE ALERT—BUT EACH STATE’S ALERT IS DIFFERENT

The Wisconsin legislature is considering creating a Purple Alert to help find missing and endangered domestic violence survivors. The law would eliminate any waiting period before law enforcement can issue a statewide notification with the missing person’s picture and information.



Florida lawmakers are considering a Purple Alert also; however, it would be used by law enforcement for a missing adult with a developmental disability. State Senator Lori Berman says she wants the alert in place after a man died while wandering away from a care center. ☺

NEW KENTUCKY LAW REQUIRES QUICK NOTIFICATIONS FOR MISSING PERSONS

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear signed a bill in March 2021 requiring law enforcement to alert the public within four hours after law enforcement is notified about a lost or missing person. The law requires using existing resources like the AMBER Alert and similar notification systems. ☺



MINNESOTA FAMILY PROPOSES “AQUA ALERT” FOR WATER EMERGENCIES

A Minnesota family wants to create an “Aqua Alert” to notify the public for water emergencies as well as other water safety initiatives. Judy Schink is raising money for the proposed initiatives after her husband presumably died while kayaking in Florida. She would also like to add more beachfront surveillance cameras and signs. ☺



CONNECTICUT RELEASES AGE-ENHANCED PHOTO OF MISSING GIRL

The Ansonia, Connecticut, Police Department released an age-enhanced photo of a one-year-old girl who has been missing since December 2019 after her mother was found deceased. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) created the photo of Vanessa Morales to enlist the public in finding the missing girl. A man has pleaded not guilty after being charged with murdering Vanessa’s mother. ☺



AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



NORTH DAKOTA CONSIDERS ASHANTI ALERT FOR MISSING ADULTS

North Dakota may create an Ashanti Alert system to notify the public when an adult between the ages of 18 and 64 goes missing. The alert would fill the gap for cases that are not covered by an AMBER Alert or Silver Alert. ↪



ELIZABETH SMART KICKS OFF SELF-DEFENSE PROGRAM IN UTAH

Kidnapping survivor Elizabeth Smart offered a free workshop in St. George, Utah, to help girls and women protect themselves from being kidnapped. The Smart Defense program was created to give tools needed to stop a potential threat or escape an attacker. The program is already established in two communities in Northern Utah. ↪



MARIANAS ISLANDS INITIATES AMBER ALERT PROGRAM

The Marianas Islands in the Northwest Pacific now has an AMBER Alert program to notify the public about an abducted child in the U.S territory. Federal legislators passed a bill in January 2021 that allows Marianas law enforcement officers to issue AMBER Alerts for abducted children. The AMBER Alerts Nationwide Act also provides the financial and technical resources from the U.S. Departments of Justice and Transportation to implement the alerts. ↪