



News Release No. 1

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VIRGINIA STATE POLICE RECOGNIZE NATIONAL A.M.B.E.R. ALERT AWARENESS DAY

RICHMOND – Two Virginia toddlers are among the many children nationwide who were successfully and safely recovered last year as a result of an A.M.B.E.R. Alert program. On Friday, Jan. 13, 2012, the Virginia State Police joins the U.S. Department of Justice, and AMBER Alert programs and Missing Children Clearinghouses across the nation in observing *AMBER Alert Awareness Day*.

On Jan. 13, 1996, Amber Hagerman was abducted while riding her bicycle and brutally murdered. The AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert network was created after her tragic death to provide emergency broadcast messages to the public when law enforcement determines a child has been abducted.

Since its inception, the AMBER Alert network has led to the recovery of more than 500 children nationwide. In 2011, Virginia activated its statewide AMBER Alert program twice. The first was June 24, 2011, for a 1-year-old male reported missing by the Harrisonburg Police Department; the second was Dec. 24, 2011, for a 2-year-old male reported missing by the Richmond Police Department. Both children were safely recovered within hours of the alert being broadcast. Virginia typically averages three to four broadcasts a year.

The Virginia AMBER Alert broadcasts include information about the child and the abductor, including physical descriptions and information about the abductor's vehicle, which could lead to the child's recovery. The continued success of the Virginia AMBER Alert program is predicated on a collaborative partnership of law enforcement, broadcasters and media, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Lottery, wireless and online companies, realtors, utilities and citizens.



Since its inception in 2002 through 2011, the Virginia AMBER Alert program has been activated 31 times.

To raise awareness of the need to continuously educate our children on the importance of being safe at home, school and play, the Virginia State Police also partners with the U.S. Department of Justice to host a poster contest for fifth graders across the Commonwealth. Each year a statewide winner is selected and submitted to compete in a national contest.

<http://www.vsp.state.va.us/MissingChildrenPosterContest.shtm>

For more information on the Virginia AMBER Alert plan and its criteria, please go to www.vaamberalert.com.

Regional Media Contacts

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