

OAAA, NCMEC Launch AMBER Alert Initiative



NCMEC Board Chair John Kelly, Jr, speaking at the AMBER Alert initiative press launch in New York City's Times Square on Tuesday, June 3.

(New York) – OAAA, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), and Department of Justice (DOJ) officials announced a major partnership between the agencies in New York's Times Square on Tuesday, June 3, to post AMBER Alerts on digital billboards nationwide. The announcement was followed by a test of the AMBER Alert creative template where more than 900 billboards across the country flipped to the same creative at the same time.

"Digital billboards are on the cutting edge of outdoor advertising technology and are uniquely suited to purposes like AMBER Alerts," said Nancy Fletcher. "Because they can be updated by computer, AMBER Alerts on digital billboards can reach thousands of drivers within minutes of the Alert being issued."

The national test was historic, as it marked the first time digital billboards controlled by nearly a dozen different companies coordinated their scheduling to run the same copy at the same time. The test generated substantial media coverage throughout the . OAAA monitored 37 press stories appearing in 22 states.

"The press coverage indicates the interest and approval for the program and digital billboards" said Jeff Golimowski, OAAA's communications director. "The test also indicated the national reach this program has and the way digital billboards can be used as a very powerful public service tool."

Participating OAAA members will be fed a signal (in the event of an AMBER Alert) from an OAAA-owned computer server which is tied directly into NCMEC's central AMBER Alert database. When an alert is issued, NCMEC will feed vital information and photographs to the OAAA server, which will then automatically place the information and

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images into a standardized creative and distribute the information to the specific geographic area affected by the Alert.

“The success of the AMBER Alert program is directly related to people’s willingness to get involved, which is invaluable,” said John Kelly, chairman of NCMEC’s board of directors. “OAAA’s digital technology will allow thousands more to join the search and in the rescue and recovery of these children.”

DOJ officials also praised the partnership, hailing it as a major and positive expansion of the AMBER Alert program.

“(Tuesday’s) announcement reflects the dynamic progress we continue to make in improving the AMBER Alert System,” said Jeff Sedgwick, the National AMBER Alert Coordinator. “This exciting initiative shows that public-private partnership are central to the protection of our children.”

For more information about the AMBER Alert Initiative and how your company can participate, contact OAAA at (202) 833-5566.