

*Remarks for the
Amber Alert Press Conference
December 23, 2002*

Good morning. We're at the height of the holiday season. It's a time for families and friends to come together, and a time for reflection on our blessings – one of which is the children of our state.

Today, we're here to announce an initiative to protect our children. The Amber Alert system has been put to use in other states, and as proven in recent months, is an effective tool in the quick resolution of child abduction cases.

Our children are our most precious resource, and we will do everything in our power to keep them safe. Mississippi's Amber Alert system will utilize existing emergency resources and help reunite abducted children with their families.

The first three hours in a child abduction case are the most critical. By being able to respond quickly in such cases, we have a better chance of the type of ending we pray for in such situations.

Our system is based on a collaborative partnership. My office has been working closely with the Department of Public Safety and the Mississippi Highway Patrol, as well as the Mississippi Association of Broadcasters and the Emergency Alert System.

I want to take a moment to thank the chairman of the Broadcaster's Association, Jim Karr, Emergency Alert System chairman Randy Bell, and Gloria Harvey with BellSouth for their cooperation in bringing this system on-line.

Their generous donation of equipment and dedicated phone lines will ensure the system operates as intended, and in the end, saves lives. Thank you.

The Amber Alert system is the newest tool in our effort to protect our children. I pray we never have to use, but I'm glad we have it in place.

I'd like to ask Lieutenant Colonel Jim Boxx, director of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, to discuss in detail how we'll use this system. Colonel Boxx?