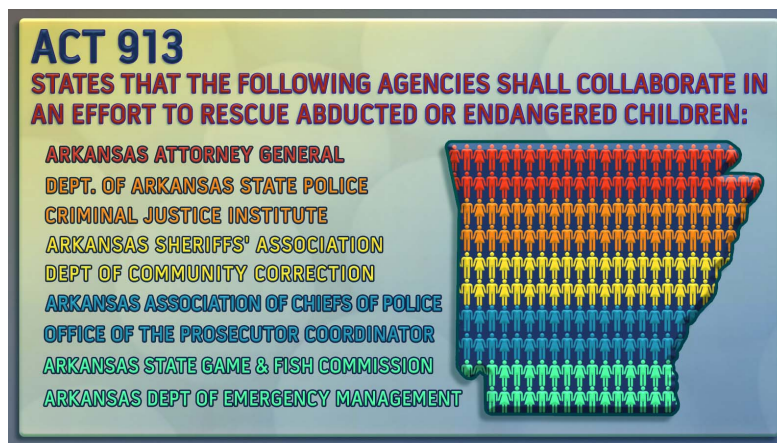




Arkansas House Newsletter

August 2, 2019

When Seconds Count



In 2018, there were 161 Amber Alerts issued nationwide. 5 of those originated here in Arkansas.

Those first minutes and hours after a child has been reported missing are crucial for law enforcement. That is why this General Assembly took an extraordinary and first of its kind step to help ensure law enforcement has all the available resources when seconds count.

In the most recent legislative session, we passed Act 913 with a unanimous vote. The legislation states that the following agencies shall collaborate in an effort to rescue abducted or endangered children:

- Arkansas Attorney General
- Department of Arkansas State Police
- Criminal Justice Institute
- Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission
- Arkansas Sheriffs' Association
- Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

- Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police
- Department of Community Correction
- Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator

CART teams greatly expand the resources that are available when a child is missing or abducted and also ensures rapid deployment of critical resources and personnel. Just last month, Arkansas is the first state in the country to successfully obtain national statewide certification for Child Abduction Response Teams (CARTs), ensuring that all children in Arkansas are better protected if abducted, missing, or endangered. National CART certification is awarded through the U.S. Department of Justice, AMBER Alert, and Technical Assistance Program.

Twelve CARTs have been formed across Arkansas. These teams are pre-organized and practiced to respond, substantially saving time and increasing the likelihood of the successful recovery of a missing, endangered or abducted child.

In order to earn certification, members of the 12 teams formed attended a series of AMBER Alert classes. Each CART was also required to implement a Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement agencies and other key agencies and organizations. The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, the Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and the Criminal Justice Institute developed a full call-out exercise built around a realistic child abduction scenario. AMBER Alert assessors evaluated the ability of each of the 12 CARTs to meet 47 standards covering 12 operational areas included in the developed exercise.

The legislation passed ensures this collaboration will continue. We would all be relieved if the CART teams never have to work on a real-life scenario, but knowing these teams are ready is the next best option.