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Gov. Blagojevich launches nationally recognized initiative to help prevent child abduction and exploitation in Illinois' 3,200 elementary and middle schools
Child Lures Prevention program teaches parents and children to recognize potential dangers and make smart decisions to avoid child predators

ELMWOOD PARK, IL—In an effort to protect children and prevent child abduction and exploitation in Illinois, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today launched the nationally recognized Child Lures Prevention Initiative, which teaches parents and children to recognize potential danger signs and make smart decisions to avoid child predators. The Child Lures Prevention Program, founded by renowned child personal safety expert Ken Wooden, will be introduced in all 3,200 public elementary and middle schools (grades 1-8) statewide in October as a resource to help protect children against predatory crime. Illinois is the first state to implement the program in schools on a statewide level.

“As a parent, I know that powerful desire to protect your child from danger. But kids aren’t always with us and we can’t always protect them. That’s why one of the most important things we can give our kids is the knowledge and reasoning tools to know how to avoid situations that could lead to serious harm,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “The Child Lures program teaches kids how to recognize potential dangers and make smart decisions, which will help them stay safe.”

The Child Lures Prevention school program teaches children life skills to keep them safe from sexual abuse, date rape, abduction, Internet crime, drugs and school violence. The Program, which can be taught within the health curriculum annually, consists of a straightforward training video and Presenter's Instruction Guide with easy-to-follow scripted lesson plans, practice scenarios, follow-up activities, comprehension assessment, and tools for parental involvement. A student video with four realistic dramatizations allows students to clearly visualize just how easily they may be lured into dangerous situations.

Each Illinois elementary and middle school will receive a package with two videos, one to prepare teachers to present the program, and one to present to children, along with a presenter’s handbook and a parent’s guide.

This school program is endorsed by the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, and is used by the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Service

Institute. Scientific research conducted by Research and Education Service for the Round Rock

In addition to the school program, over 500,000 Child Lures Prevention Parent Guides will be available at Chicago CVS Pharmacy locations and auto dealerships that are members of the Chicago Automotive Dealers Association.

NBC 5 in Chicago will broadcast a one-hour "Smart Choices, Safe Kids: A Child Lures Prevention Town Hall Meeting" on Saturday, September 17, at 6:00 p.m. The town hall meeting will also be broadcast by NBC affiliates in Quincy, Rockford, the Quad Cities, Springfield, Peoria and Southern Illinois.

The Child Lures Prevention Initiative on NBC 5 is sponsored by the Chicago Automobile Dealers Association, CVS/Pharmacy, and the Chicago Sun-Times. More information can be found at www.childlures.org.

"The Child Lures Community Plan provides communities with four powerful resources: a television news series, a prevention program for schools, a parent guide for the home, and accredited in-service and community awareness training," said Ken Wooden, founder of Child Lures Prevention. "The first priority of parents is the safety and well-being of their children."

At least 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services estimates that more than 8,000 children are sexually abused every year in Illinois.

The Child Lures Prevention Initiative builds on the Governor's long-standing effort to prevent sexual abuse and child abduction, and to recover missing children in Illinois. This summer, Gov. Blagojevich signed a bill that creates lifetime supervised parole for sex offenders, and signed legislation that says only one sex offender can live in a building after they leave prison to prevent them from concentrating in certain communities. The Governor also launched one of the most aggressive sex offender management plans in state history through the expanded supervision of released sex offenders. The FY 2006 budget included funding to hire new parole agents and support staff to expand monitoring of sex offenders. With the additional funding and agents, the Illinois Department of Corrections will implement a GPS, or Global Positioning System, to use satellite technology to track movement of parolees.

Since the Governor created a new AMBER Alert system for Illinois, more than a dozen missing children have been found. In addition, over the last two years, the Governor's mandate to the Department of Children and Family Services to find missing kids has resulted in a reduction in the number of children missing from state custody by nearly half, from more than 600 in 2003 to just over 300 in 2005. Other advances include:

- **Find Our Children Act:** In August, the governor signed the "Find Our Children Act," requiring all state agencies that maintain an Internet website to include a hypertext link to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children home page. The

Governor also signed House Bill 181, which gives the Illinois State Police, with written permission of a child's parent or guardian, the authority to retain children's fingerprint cards until their 18th birthday. The fingerprints may only be used to help find children who are missing or abducted.

- **AMBER Task Force:** In April 2003 the Illinois AMBER Task Force was created, making Illinois one of only two states in the nation to form a partnership with the National Weather Service and Broadcasters Association. Through the partnership, the ISP sends information on a missing or abducted children to radio and television outlets throughout the state for immediate broadcast. In May 2003, the Illinois AMBER Task Force launched a new website--<http://www.amberillinois.org>--where the latest updates on active AMBER broadcasts will be available, and began airing public service announcements to raise awareness about the system.

- **State-of-the-art AMBER Alert technology:** The SBC Foundation provided a \$77,000 grant to support the AMBER Alert system in Illinois. The funds were used to purchase new computers, communication equipment, management technologies and training materials to produce a faster response.

Interstate Agreement on Missing and Exploited Children: Illinois working in a partnership with Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Ohio make up the Interstate Agreement on Missing and Exploited Children. The agreement was established as a network to improve identifying and recovering missing children. The Council is comprised of representatives of state law enforcement and criminal justice agencies from each of these states and meets annually.