

Tackett pushes regional Amber Alert system

By RYAN SMITH
News Tribune

Prosecutor Bill Tackett said he is spearheading an effort to get a regional Amber Alert in place in Mid-Missouri.

Tackett says the statewide system (Missouri ALERT) is a good one, but a regional system would be even more effective.

"A regional system accelerates the response time, which can save a child's life. When that's at stake, it's always worth the investment," Tackett said.

The Amber Alert is an emergency bulletin to the public when a child has been abducted and may be in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

During Amber Alerts, area radio and television stations interrupt regular programming to broadcast information about the missing child using the Emergency Alert System with the hope that it will provide additional eyes and ears to assist law enforcement in locating the child.

Authorities also say Amber Alerts also can coerce a kidnapper into releasing a child for fear of being arrested and serve as a deterrent to people from committing that type of crime.

Currently there are four regional Amber Alert systems in place in Missouri — in Kansas City, St. Louis, Southwest and Northwest Missouri.

Tackett said he'd like to see a Mid-Missouri Amber Alert system in place "in a matter of weeks."

"I've talked to (JCPD Chief Roger) Schroeder and he's excited about it, and (Cole County Sher-

iff) Greg White and he's on board," said Tackett. "We just need to get everyone else to participate."

Amber Alert systems primarily consist of voluntary, cooperative partnerships between law-enforcement agencies and local radio and television broadcasters.

"We can do it here, it's just going to require people being on the same page and making it a priority," said Tackett.

Nixon extends gas price gouging probe

Attorney General Jay Nixon announced Friday his gasoline price gouging investigation will be extended for several more weeks to include any reports of gouging following Hurricane Rita.

Nixon said more than 50 stations in Missouri are already under review for price gouging during and following Hurricane Katrina. The results from that investigation are expected next week.

"Consumers in Missouri are actively reporting to us and we are following leads throughout the state," Nixon said. "Some stations have clearly taken advantage of a natural disaster to inflate prices, which is a violation of Missouri law."

Nixon said stations violating price gouging regulations will pay penalties. After the 9/11 attacks, Nixon settled price gouging claims with 48 stations with fines total more than \$60,000.

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