



AMBER Alert Partners Honored on National Missing Children's Day

The 2008 National Missing Children's Day ceremony held May 21 in Washington, D.C., recognized that help arrives in many forms, from the nation's top law enforcement officers, detectives, medical care providers to even a fifth grade student.

U.S. Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey gave the keynote speech at the ceremony to thank everyone involved in bringing missing and abducted children home safely.



U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey addresses the ceremony audience

paired. There are few challenges that we in law enforcement take on where it can clearly be said that we are fighting on the side of angels."

Mukasey and J. Robert Flores, Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, honored the following people with special awards at the ceremony:

- South Florida Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Detective Justin Spence and Michigan ICAC Task Force Detective Sgt. Jay Poupard each received the Attorney General's Special Commendation Award for taking prompt action to stop a man who plotted to rape and murder his eight-year-old niece.

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Top AMBER Alert Leader To Teach Nation About Abducted Children

For 28 years, Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, the Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs and current National AMBER Alert Coordinator, taught Political Science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and now he's turning his skills as a professor into educating people about the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs and the AMBER Alert system.

"I was humbled," Sedgwick said, when he learned President George W. Bush nominated him for the position of Assistant Attorney

General for OJP. "I spent my whole life in academia," said Sedgwick, who is currently on extended leave from the university. But he was ready for another challenge, and a challenge is what he received.

Now, instead of educating the minds of tomorrow's leaders, Sedgwick is responsible for providing overall management and oversight of OJP and for assisting state and local officials with coordinating, developing, enhancing and promoting AMBER Alert plans.

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Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, National AMBER Alert Coordinator

AMBER Fact:

A total of 227 AMBER Alerts were issued in 2007 for 278 children. The alerts were directly responsible for recovering 48 children and another 188 children were recovered safely. Six children were found dead.

LETTERS TO THE AMBER ADVOCATE

"The CART training I received from Fox Valley Technical Institute has definitely been some of the best, most professionally delivered training that I have received in my 24 years in law enforcement. Every law enforcement officer across this country should have the good fortune to attend at least one of your training sessions. Their communities would definitely benefit from the instruction of your presenters."

Anthony R. Campbell
Somerdale, New Jersey Chief of Police

"Thanks so much for distributing the AMBER Advocate. I found [the last] issue particularly interesting, especially the brief comments about the importance of coordinating the State's Missing Children Clearinghouse with AMBER Alert activations and missing children reports in general. I am very thankful for the conference coverage you provide."

Richard N. Robinson
North Dakota Department of
Emergency Services Planning Specialist

On The Front Lines

AMBER ALERT IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM

The radio was playing at the emergency room at Sentara Leigh Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia when the normal broadcasting stopped for an AMBER Alert. The Portsmouth, Virginia Police Department reported that Kimberly Gardner had abducted one-month old Matashia L'Faith Holder Ricks.

It was December 20, 2007 and Radiological Assistant Sue Midgett and Radiological Technician Lisa Ahlbrandt were ordered

out loud if the baby would be found before Christmas. Suddenly both medical workers realized they had just treated the suspect and she was carrying an infant.

"We immediately recognized the name and what the baby was wearing," said Midgett. "We both ran to the emergency room and tried to stall the woman with the baby. I went over and said, 'I did not get to hold the baby.'"

"Your adrenaline kicks in because we just knew we were dead on," said Ahlbrandt. "I thought she was going to snatch the baby and leave."

The hospital security staff was notified and the emergency room was locked down. Police officers arrived minutes later and arrested the suspect.

"It felt good," said Midgett. "I am glad we were listening to the radio at the right time," added Ahlbrandt.

"After all was said and done, what

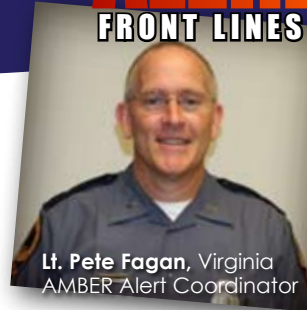
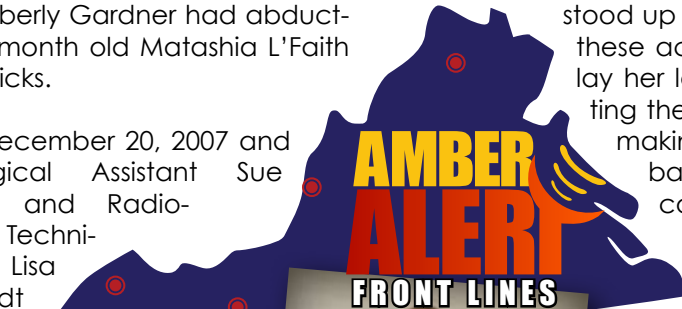
these women did was use personal courage to return this baby," said Lieutenant Pete Fagan, the Virginia AMBER Alert Coordinator. "They were there and they knew they needed to do something. They really stood up and took all these actions to delay her leaving, getting the police and making sure the baby was recovered safely."

Fagan said he originally considered issuing an Endangered Missing Child Alert for the infant but evidence kept coming in to support an AMBER Alert.

"Those red flags started coming up," said Fagan. "I was worried because you want to make the right decision." Looking back, Fagan said issuing the AMBER Alert was the right call.

The heroic efforts of the two hospital employees prompted Fagan to nominate them for the AMBER Alert Citizen Award. Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey presented Ahlbrandt and Midgett with the award at the May 21 National Missing Children's Day ceremony in Washington, D.C.

"I think the AMBER Alert is the most wonderful thing in the world," said Midgett. "The radio plays it over and over and I love seeing the alerts on the highway signs. I do not know how a kidnapper can get down the road."



Lt. Pete Fagan, Virginia AMBER Alert Coordinator



Ahlbrandt and Midgett receive the AMBER Alert Citizen Award at the National Missing Children's Day Ceremony

• Lt. Jessica Farnsworth with the Utah Attorney General's Office was given the AMBER Alert Law Enforcement Award for bringing federal, state and local law enforcement officers together for Utah's first state-wide Child Abduction Response Team. (CART) "There is not a single agency that has all the resources needed during a child abduction so we all have to work together," said Farnsworth. "When everyone cooperates it cuts down time, and time is critical when a child is taken."

• Lisa Ahlbrandt, a Radiological Technician and Sue Midgett, a Radiological Assistant, each received the AMBER Alert Citizen Award for saving a one-month-old baby after the abductor brought the infant to the hospital. (See "On The Front Lines" on previous page)

• Maryland State Trooper Becky North received the Child Protection Award for building the case against a child rapist who is now serving a 99 year prison sentence.

• Douyon Park, a fifth grade student from Quail Hollow Elementary in Sandy, Utah, received the Missing Children's Day Art Contest Award for her poster. "I wanted people to know that kids are missing and that it would be great if they could help find them," said Park.

Ernie Allen, President and CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, noted how the AMBER Alert, technology and help from the private sector are now accomplishing more than anyone ever imagined for missing children. "More missing children are coming home safely today than any time in history," said Allen.

As a prime example of the public-

private partnership, Allen said the "Have You Seen Me?" flyers with pictures of missing children go into 85 million homes every week. A member of Congress questioned Allen about spending so much money on the program until he learned the ADVO company had done it as a public service for 23 years.

Ed Smart, the father of abduction survivor Elizabeth Smart, thanked everyone for what has been done for missing children but also challenged everyone to do more—especially when it comes to funding child safety legislation. "Children don't care if we are Democrats or Republicans," said Smart. "They just want to be saved." Smart also had a message for would-be abductors: "Don't do it or the whole nation will be looking for you."

Elizabeth Smart was also at the ceremony to help unveil a new book to help child abduction victims.

"You're Not Alone: The Journey from Abduction to Empowerment" was written by Smart and four other abduction survivors. (See "You're Not Alone" story on page 5)

Attorney General Mukasey noted that President Ronald Reagan established National Missing Children's Day 25 years ago to place the protection and safety of children as "one of our highest priorities." The ceremony also marked the second anniversary of Project Safe Childhood, a federal effort to protect children from online exploitation and abuse.

"The work of today's award winners and all of you is a compelling argument that we are not helpless," said Mukasey. "We are engaged in a fight, and we are pressing forward." ☺



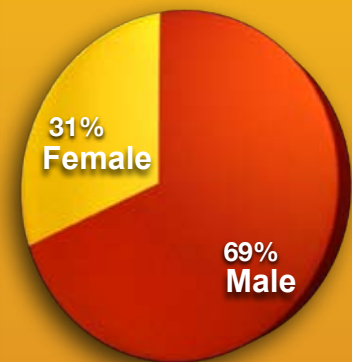
National Missing Children's Day Award recipients and honored guests

ENDANGERED PERSON ADVISORY PLAN LAUNCHED IN SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota now has a plan for missing person cases that don't meet the AMBER Alert criteria. The Endangered Person Advisory was launched by South Dakota Attorney General Larry Long in conjunction with Missing Children's Day.

AMBER Fact:

In 2007, more than two-thirds of all abductors involved in AMBER Alerts (141) were male and one-third (63) were female.



FLORIDA STARTS "OFFICER DOWN ALERTS"

Florida Governor Charlie Crist signed an executive order on May 5 to establish Officer Down Alerts. The alerts are similar to an AMBER Alert and will go out when a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured on the job. The alerts will go up on highway signs to help catch suspects after an officer goes down.

AMBER ALERTS GET THEIR OWN BILLBOARDS

Billboards across the country are now showing AMBER Alerts when a child is abducted. On June 3 the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) tested the alert system on 800 digital billboards and across the country. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) will send the secondary alerts to geographically targeted areas. Contact NCMEC's Bob Hoever at rhoever@ncmec.org for more information.

AMBER Fact:

Six states issued AMBER Alerts in 2007 for children taken in other states.

Originating State	Extending State
Arizona	Texas
California	Nevada
Indiana	Illinois
Mississippi	Georgia
North Carolina	South Carolina
Washington	Montana

CONGRESS CONSIDERING NATIONAL SILVER ALERT PLAN

Congress is considering two bills that would bring Silver Alerts to every state. The Silver Alert is used to find missing seniors with dementia. Florida Representative Gus Bilrakis has introduced the Silver Alert Grant Program that would give all states and territories \$100,000 to start Silver Alert programs. Texas Representative Lloyd Doggett introduced the National Silver Alert Act which would authorize up to \$10 million in grants to create a voluntary national system.

Profile: Nicole Morrell

TROOPER MAKES A FULL-TIME COMMITMENT TO AMBER ALERTS

Nobody has to convince Trooper Nicole Morrell that being a State AMBER Alert Coordinator is a full-time job. In fact it is a full-time position for the Massachusetts AMBER Alert Coordinator.

"I make sure the plan is working," said Morrell. "I try to streamline it and make sure it is running ok."

Massachusetts' first AMBER Alert Coordinator made the full-time position possible. Lt. Col. Marian McGovern hired Morrell to replace her in 2006. "I felt honored to try and fill her shoes," said Morrell.



Nicole Morrell, Massachusetts AMBER Alert Coordinator

So far, so good. Massachusetts has issued 14 AMBER Alerts and safely recovered 19 children. But Morrell is still trying to make the State AMBER Alert Plan work even better. One ongoing effort is to find new businesses willing to put AMBER Alerts on their digital billboards.

During the NFL playoffs, Morrell convinced the New England Patriots to make a public service announcement about AMBER Alerts. "The Patriots said they would continue to help our program," said Morrell. She also hopes to enlist the Boston Red Sox to pitch in and support AMBER Alerts.

This year Morrell launched a new e-mail notification system to contact AMBER Alert partners. The first activation of the Emnet system took place April 30 when a couple abducted and threatened to kill their six-month old son after losing a custody battle. The alert went out at 4:30 p.m. and the mother took the child to the police station three hours later. "When they saw themselves on TV they felt their world was crashing around them," said Morrell. "They felt like they could not go

out without being noticed."

The state had another success story this year that did not involve the AMBER Alert. A six-month-old boy was missing from his crib but nobody saw what happened and police had no evidence of a kidnapping. Massachusetts issued an Endangered Child Advisory and a man came forward and confessed to taking the child. The baby was safe even though the suspect had hidden the baby in his mother's basement and then in the trunk of his car.

"We know the criteria for an AMBER Alert is very strict and we adhere to the guidelines. But when an agency asks for an AMBER Alert, the last thing I want to do is say 'No' and 'Good luck!'" said Morrell. "The advisory gave us a little wiggle room and we were so excited it was a safe recovery."

Before taking on the AMBER Alert post, Morrell got her start investigating sexual assaults, homicides and child abductions. She was involved in the high-profile investigation for Molly Bish. The 16-year-old lifeguard was abducted on June 27, 2000 and found dead three years later. Massachusetts will mark the eighth anniversary of the Bish abduction by inviting neighboring states to take part in a training for a Child Abduction Response Team. The CART training will take place five miles from the place where Bish disappeared.

It is Morrell's hope that Massachusetts and every state will have a CART program soon. "It takes a lot of hard work to save abducted children," said Morrell. "Hard work and dedication." ☺

"You're Not Alone"

CHILD ABDUCTION SURVIVORS WRITE THE BOOK ON RECOVERY

Alicia Kozakiewicz was only 13-years-old when she was lured away by an Internet predator and chained by her neck for four days. When Kozakiewicz returned home she did not have someone who could relate to what she had endured. Now Kozakiewicz is sharing her experience in "You're Not Alone: The Journey From Abduction to Empowerment." The book was written by five child abduction survivors--for child abduction survivors.

"We all had different experiences but we each experienced the same emotions," said Kozakiewicz. "I hope others will relate to the fact that I felt so alone."

The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention unveiled "You're Not Alone" at the National Missing Children's Day ceremony. The book is a companion piece to the previously published "When Your Child Is Missing" for the parents of missing or abducted children and "What About Me?" for siblings of abduction victims.

The five authors are now young adults and in the book they share what helped, what hurt and what to expect with time. The book also contains a list of rights for survivors, such as:

- You have the right to your own story
- You have the right to your own feelings
- You have the right to know what is happening to you and around you

Elizabeth Smart thought the book might be a way to help others who survived an abduction. Smart was 14-years-old when a man took her from her bedroom at knife point and held her captive for nine months.

"I hope the book will provide hope and let survivors know that they are not alone and there is life after being kidnapped," said Smart. "It is ok to feel how you feel and it is possible to move on."

The final seven pages of the 70-page booklet are blank. Those empty pages are left for the next survivor to tell his or her story. ☺



Authors of "You're Not Alone: The Journey From Abduction to Empowerment"

NORTHEAST GETS NEW AMBER ALERT LIAISON

AMBER Alert Coordinators in the Northeast region will now have Bonnie Lane as their liaison. Lane has been overseeing the AMBER Alert Extranet and recently retired from the Illinois State Police. Lane will replace Jon Dewalt, who was also involved in marketing for the AMBER Alert Initiative. Best wishes to Lane and Dewalt in their new endeavors.

Misguided And Phony AMBER Alerts Put Children At Risk

Numerous people received a text message on their cell phones with this alarming message: "AMBER ALERT! two little girls kidnapped the suspect is driving a brown jeep liberty. Headed towards billings area license plate #43-6519. KEEP THIS GOING!"

The message had punctuation problems but it was also missing some key information:

- Where and when were the girls abducted?
- Which law enforcement agency issued the alert?
- What did the girls and the suspect look like and what were they wearing?

• What state issued the license plate on the vehicle?

A real AMBER Alert was actually issued in Montana on April 11 and the two girls were recovered two days later. However, the text message continued to spread across the country well after the recovery and message details were modified in different states.

"This ultimately caused confusion and put the integrity of the AMBER Alert system into question," said National AMBER Alert Coordinator Jeffrey L. Sedgwick. "Maintaining a solid reputation by guarding against the spread of misinformation is vital to our continued success."

Sedgwick encouraged AMBER Alert Coordinators to educate the public to only respond to AMBER Alerts sent through legitimate channels like radio and television, highway advisory signs and the Wireless AMBER Alert Initiative. Several coordinators used the misguided message as an opportunity to remind the public to sign up for free AMBER Alerts text messages at www.wirelessamber-alerts.org.

"These alerts are well intentioned but they are creating mass confusion," says Robert Hoever, Associate Director of Training for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). "I am really con-

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AMBER Alerts Becoming A Reality In Indian Country



Above: Ernie Allen, NCMEC President and CEO **Below:** Tribal Law Enforcement at NCMEC Headquarters in DC

NEW BOOK HELPS CALL-TAKERS WITH MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

The standard has been set for dispatchers handling calls for missing or sexually exploited children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) has just released a 40-page manual that offers advice on what to do when a child is lost, missing, thrown away, abducted or sexually exploited. The book includes resources, checklists, policy examples and specific instructions on what to do during an AMBER Alert. The manual is available online at www.apcointl.org.

Acoma Tribal Police Chief Kevin Marinao is amazed at how borders and barriers between tribes are coming down because of the AMBER Alert. Marinao said the tribes are united by the common goal of protecting abducted children. "The information we are able to share is bringing the tribes together for a closer relationship," said Marinao.

The Acoma Tribe is taking part in the ten pilot sites selected by the Department of Justice to bring AMBER Alerts into Indian Country. The key participants in this effort met in May for a one-week training in Washington, D.C. to see what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done.

"We are all brothers and sisters and we are here to protect all of our children regardless of whether they came from this community, this tribe or this family," said Acoma Tribe Council Member Clinton Garcia.

Jim Walters is the liaison for the AMBER Alert in Indian Country initiative. Walters said many people are amazed at how well the tribes and the federal government are working together. "People have said it could not be done," said Walters at the training. "But you have done it."

Walters outlined the immediate goals for the pilot sites:

- Set a meeting with your state AMBER Alert Coordinator
- Develop AMBER Alert criteria
- Establish a date for implementing the AMBER Alert
- Identify partners and develop Memorandums of Understanding

"If your tribal AMBER Alert criteria is different than the state criteria, you



Breakout groups set Indian Country AMBER Alert plans in action

need to work out a way to reconcile those differences," said Walters. "We deal with this issue a lot when states are working with bordering states on an AMBER Alert."

The training included a tour of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. After receiving a warm welcome and introduction from NCMEC President and CEO Ernie Allen, participants learned more about the resources available from the center, including help on international abductions, facial reconstruction, LOCATER, training and educational materials.

Several tribes are now planning to include a Child Abduction Response Team as part of their AMBER Alert plan. Training participants are also hoping that other tribes that are not part of the pilot will want to participate as soon as possible.

Stephen Chavez of the Laguna Police Department said he is asked all the time why he is working so hard to bring AMBER Alerts to his community. "If a child is taken, we are prepared," said Chavez. "If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes several villages to protect a child."

Zuni Tribal Police Lieutenant Vinton Ghachu said the training was helpful to see what other tribes are doing with their AMBER Alert plans. "We have learned what obstacles they have come across," said Ghachu. "We will try and eliminate those obstacles so there are no barriers to implementing the AMBER Alert." ☺

CANADIAN CORNER

AMBER Alert Training: Up Close And Personal

New Brunswick AMBER Alert Coordinator Todd Chadwick is about to embark on a tour of 60 towns and cities to make sure every law enforcement officer in his province is trained on the AMBER Alert.

"Education is needed for the street level cop," said Chadwick. "We need to put the AMBER Alert training in the street cop's head so he can think at the very beginning about what to do. They need to know what is and is not an AMBER Alert."

An enormous effort considering the fact that New Brunswick has never issued an AMBER Alert. Constable Chadwick is with the Miramichi Police Force and he helped set up the AMBER Alert Plan in New Brunswick in 2003 after learning about the program in the United States.

Five years later, Chadwick is busy making sure officers are aware of

how the AMBER Alert Plan is evolving. The alerts can now go out in New Brunswick to trucking companies, taxis and other new partners.

Law enforcement officers in New Brunswick and throughout Canada are also getting AMBER Alert training online. The Canadian Police Knowledge Network (www.cpkn.ca) now offers the "Missing Child First Responder" course. The four-hour course includes AMBER Alert training and is designed to "make a difference between a positive outcome and a tragic result."

Chadwick says the online course is a good alternative for law enforcement agencies that cannot afford to send officers away for a training. In the meantime, he is preparing to take AMBER Alert training in person to every municipality in his province. "We are and we will be prepared," said Chadwick. ☺



Todd Chadwick, New Brunswick AMBER Alert Coordinator

Phony AMBER, continued from page 5

cerned that this is going to cause the AMBER Alert to lose credibility with the public."

The text message is the latest example of misguided and even fake AMBER Alerts being sent nationwide. Many of the so-called AMBER Alerts that circulate by text message and e-mail involve cases that have already been resolved or outright hoaxes, including:

- Nine-year-old Penny Brown⁽¹⁾ has been missing for two weeks. This hoax has been circulating by e-mail since 2001.
- Fifteen-year-old Evan Trembley⁽²⁾ has been missing for two weeks. A Wichita Falls TV station reported the prankster behind this fake AMBER Alert is the "missing boy" in the picture.
- Thirteen-year-old Ashley Flores⁽³⁾ from Philadelphia has been missing for two weeks. This e-mail has been

circulating since 2006 and NCMEC has never found a missing child by this name or description.

Most states can file criminal charges against a person for sending a false AMBER Alert and for making a false report to law enforcement. Some states have specific laws dealing with sending a false AMBER Alert.

The pranksters are not only breaking the law but they are also taking advantage of people who simply want to save an abducted child. Broadcasters involved with the AMBER Alert program are very troubled by this trend. "The AMBER Alert is too valuable a law enforcement tool to have damaged by thoughtless actions," said Utah Broadcasters Association President Dale Zabriskie. ☺



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Sedgwick, continued from page 1

As Sedgwick sits in his Washington, D.C. office, his spectacles covering his brown eyes, you feel the emotion in his voice, as he talks about two separate meetings he had with two parents, both of whom had highly publicized child abduction cases covered throughout the media. The parents being, Ed Smart, the father of Elizabeth Smart, who was abducted from her home on June 5, 2002 and rescued nine months later, and the British family, Kate and Gerry McCann, who had their four-year-old daughter, Madeleine, abducted May 3, 2007 from their Portuguese vacation resort.

"If you reflect, you can see the differences," Sedgwick said. "One family got their child back, and the other family is still actively looking." And one country had an AMBER Alert in place, whereas the other country is still advocating for one.

During Sedgwick's time as the AMBER Alert Coordinator, his goal is to keep the momentum pertaining to AMBER Alerts up, and keep the vision of a national AMBER Alert network on the forefront.

Sedgwick supports a "seamless" AMBER Alert network. "We are working with our Native American partners on the use of AMBER Alert in Indian Country, and with Mexico and Canada in case children are abducted across our northern or southern borders. Everyone from law enforcement to government to broadcasters has worked very hard to make the AMBER Alert program a success in their state and nationwide," said Sedgwick. "We are constantly looking for ways to expand the AMBER Alert program, so police and sheriffs' departments gain thousands or even millions of allies in the search for missing children."

While Sedgwick is actively advocating for AMBER Alert expansion, he also knows that in order to keep AMBER Alerts operating successfully, people need to be constantly looking toward the future.

"The sooner you find the child, the more likely the positive outcome," he said. "Time is your enemy, so you really have to have a good sense of what people are paying attention to and get the information out in the shortest amount of time. For example, 20 years ago people were listening to Sony Walkman's, but now it's iPods and MP3 players. We need to keep up with the times and get the AMBER Alert system out there."

A prime example of keeping up with technology is the Wireless AMBER Alert initiative, and how wireless subscribers are able to receive AMBER Alert text messages on their cell phones by registering at www.wirelessamberalerts.org. Sedgwick said, "a few years ago, this would have been unheard of, but because we are staying focused on technology, we are keeping the AMBER Alert system successful."

Sedgwick has written on many aspects of the United States government, such as: policy analysis and evaluation, criminal justice policy, executive leadership and public finance. He also authored Law Enforcement Planning: The Limits of an Economic Approach and Detering Criminals: Policymaking and the American Political Tradition.

Sedgwick's education consists of an A.B. from Kenyon College (1973) and his M.A.P.A and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia (1975 and 1978 respectively).

