



Missing Child Recovered: A Community Involved

An emergency notification system used in concert with the 9-1-1 system keeps the lines of communications open between public safety officials and constituents.

THE CITY OF FRANKFORT, KY used its new emergency telephone notification system to rapidly call more than 3,000 residents and businesses in an area in which a child and his abductor were last seen. Emergency Management Director Deron Rambo activated the emergency alert to citizens asking for their cooperation.

Police began looking for a man and child after receiving word from the Virginia State Police Department that a father was wanted for parental kidnapping of his two-year old son following a bitter custody battle. Although the mother and son were from Virginia, the father was reportedly last seen with the child in the Frankfort, KY area.

Frankfort Kentucky Emergency Management Agency (EMA) personnel were in

the field at the time the location of the missing child came in. Frankfort's E9-1-1 Center called Rambo and notified him of the situation. At the same time, the police were being dispatched to take the call.

Rambo's first action was to drive through the neighborhood where the pair was last seen. When it seemed the crisis was not going to be resolved immediately, he went to the command post to start an official search mission. He made the decision to use the Universal Communications System (UCS) provided by Twenty First Century Communications (TFCC), and discussed it with the police commander at the command post. "We knew that the person was on-foot and in a general area," said Rambo. "We had units driving the neighborhood looking, so I thought it would be

the perfect time to use the system. We felt that if everyone in the area was looking, someone had to see something."

Rambo placed a cellular call to the TFCC 24/7 Help Desk in Columbus, OH to request assistance in launching a call-out program to alert area residents and request their help in locating the missing boy. UCS Client Manager Elizabeth Drake took the call. Rambo provided a description of the man and the child, and a location where they were last spotted. As the perpetrator was on foot, Rambo requested that TFCC call all residents within a two-mile radius, give the description and ask people to call 9-1-1 with any information.

Drake used the UCS GIS-Mapping function to isolate the area on the map, a two-mile radius from the major intersection at which the pair had last been spotted. The mapping program automatically generated a list of all the phone numbers within that radius. She then created a message script providing the information Rambo had requested. The UCS converted the message to voice using the Text-to-Speech function. At 12:03 p.m., Drake activated the program, which called 3,488 phone numbers. Schools in the area were also called and they closed their doors for safety.

Less than 20 minutes later, a woman who received the message saw the pair outside her window. In fact, at 12:24 p.m., three simultaneous calls were made to 9-1-1 saying the child had been spotted. Other callers gave their locations; as expected, the pair was on foot but had moved into an area the police had not yet searched. They had actually traveled outside of the initial search area, approximately three miles from the point last seen. An officer immediately responded and found the subject and child within a couple of minutes.

The 3,488 outdial calls and the three incoming calls to the 9-1-1 center were made and the child was recovered before the Amber Alert was issued. In fact, the Frankfort EMA and the Frankfort Police Department had been in the process of put-

