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NEWS RELEASE

DPS Joins Nationwide Effort to Protect Children

May 25 marks National Missing Children's Day

AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) is joining other law enforcement partners and advocates at various events around the state to promote “Take 25,” a public awareness campaign developed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) that encourages parents, guardians, educators and other caretakers to take 25 minutes to talk to their children about safety and ways to prevent abduction. These events aim to make child safety a priority surrounding National Missing Children’s Day, which is May 25th.

“Children have a tendency to trust that all adults have their best interest in mind, so we must educate our most vulnerable Texans about the dangers of those who would do them harm,” said DPS Director Steven McCraw. “DPS fully supports this public awareness effort by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and our troopers are speaking to school children about how to recognize and avoid dangers in their environment. DPS is committed to protecting Texas children by continuing to utilize the DPS Sex Offender Registry and Missing Persons Clearinghouse; by activating Amber Alerts throughout the state when a child goes missing; and by educating our troopers on indicators that may help them determine if a child is in danger during a standard traffic stop.”

Today Texas records show more than 4,900 active cases of missing children, up to 17 years of age. Many missing children are recovered safely, but “Take 25” helps raise awareness and gives children and parents information that can help prevent dangerous situations.

“We know that teaching children about safety works. Community events play an important role in helping parents understand how they can help save a child’s life,” said Ernie Allen, President and CEO of NCMEC. “We are very grateful that Director McCraw and the Texas Department of Public Safety share our commitment to keeping children safe. They play an important role in raising public awareness in communities across Texas.”

Every year in America, an estimated 800,000 children are reported missing – that’s more than 2,000 each day. Of that number, 200,000 are abducted by family members and 58,000 are abducted by non-family members, for which the primary motive is sexual. Each year, 115 children are the victims of the most serious abductions; they are taken by non-family members and either murdered, ransomed or taken with the intent to keep.

According to NCMEC, in the vast majority of attempted abduction cases the child escaped through their own actions, illustrating that teaching children about safety works and saves lives.

May 25 is the anniversary of the day in 1979 when 6-year-old Etan Patz disappeared from a New York street corner on his way to school. This day has been observed as National Missing Children's Day since 1983, when it was first proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan.

To find out more information on "Take 25" and how to get involved, please visit www.take25.org.

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