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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 7, 2016

Anniversary of abduction raises parental awareness *Establishment of Amber Alert reminds parents to take action*

PROSPER (January 7, 2016) The 20th anniversary of the tragedy which resulted in the establishment of the Amber Alert system in cases of missing children occurs on Jan. 13, says Assistant Police Chief Gary McHone.

“Those of us who were around the area when Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered recall it vividly,” he said. “That tragedy, which spawned the alert system now used nationwide, illustrated that it can happen anywhere, anytime.”

In commemoration of the anniversary, Prosper Police encourage parents to adopt the following three strategies to help prevent a recurrence of the 1996 abduction.

First, create a family-only password with your children. When a need arises to send someone to pick them up or when an emergency happens, teach your children to ask for the password and only go with those who know it. “If necessary, change the password if it becomes compromised,” said the Chief.

Second, make it a point to know how much information about your children is readily available. Refrain from adding their names to backpacks, and when posting information on social media, do not include their home address or school schedule or any information that can be used to track them.

Finally, create a free, private and secure Safety Profile for your household at www.smart911.com which can include current photos and physical descriptions of your children.

“If a child goes missing and a family member calls 9-1-1, their profile can be seen by the dispatcher,” he added. “This allows the operator to share the child’s photo and description to responders in the field immediately.”

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children says the first three hours are the most critical when trying to locate a missing child. Without a Smart911 profile, it may take as much as an hour to distribute a current photo to officers in the field.

“A missing child is a terrifying nightmare for parents and guardians,” he said. “When something like this happens, it’s very difficult to think straight, to even be able to give a good description of the child. Having a Smart911 profile can make an incredible difference.”

The Smart911 service also allows for residents to receive notifications on weather emergencies and other similar alerts.

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ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 15,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper’s vision is to remain a “Place Where Everyone Matters.”