Fingerprinting program aids law enforcement in cases of missing kids

Monday, October 20, 2008
The Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office will be fingerprinting parish first-graders next week in accordance with the state's Missing Children Identification Act.

The legislation, enacted in 1985, provides for fingerprint records of elementary school children to assist families and law enforcement if a child is reported missing. The identification cards are free of charge to parents and are maintained by each school's principal until the child reaches sixth grade. Children are only printed if parents agree.

Over the next several weeks, deputies and auxiliaries will fingerprint thousands of first-graders at Caddo public and private elementary schools. On Monday, October 20, they will be at Forest Hills Elementary at 9 a.m. They will be also be at Claiborne on Tuesday at 8:30 a.m.; A.C. Steere on Wednesday at 9 a.m.; Caddo Heights on Thursday at 1:30 p.m.; and Turner on Friday at 8:30 a.m. and Hillsdale at 1 p.m. Students at other schools will be fingerprinted in coming months.

Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator said in addition to the fingerprint cards, this is a good time for parents to organize a personal ID file for each child. The file provides law enforcement officers with specific information that can be used to help locate a missing child or identify a child who has been found. Items in the file should include recent photographs; the child's description, including date of birth, height, weight, hair color and eye color; distinguishing marks; a list of the child's friends and favorite places to hang out; bicycle description; and a videotape of your child talking, playing, etc., with the child prominently featured and in focus.