



## Teaming Up with Law Enforcement: How Digital Billboards Help Public Safety By Peter J. Elliott

**(Cleveland, OH)** – Teamwork is vital to law enforcement. Now law enforcement has a new, effective, high-tech member of our team: digital billboards. I'd like to share with you – from the perspective of law enforcement – how this powerful tool works on behalf of public safety.

On May 28, Robbi Potter, 27, escaped a halfway house in Mansfield, OH. He is a Tier III sex offender convicted of crimes against minors. We searched nationwide for this suspect, knowing that he and an associate fled with a four-year-old girl, Haylee Donathan.

Nearly a month had gone by, with this suspect still at large. On Monday, June 22, I called my friend Bill Platko at Clear Channel Outdoor. Bill quickly volunteered to help.

I forwarded digital pictures to Clear Channel Outdoor. They created a billboard design in an hour and the approved design was posted on digital billboards in multiple states within four hours.

Within 24 hours, the suspect and his associate were arrested at a retreat center in Valley Center, CA. Haylee was safely recovered.



A tipster who recognized the pictures on one of the digital billboards called 911. Authorities in California made a quick arrest without incident. "We don't watch TV," the tipster was quoted in a California newspaper.

In this case, many officers from various jurisdictions worked long hours. This case received media attention, including CNN and America's Most Wanted.

Law enforcement is more effective, and ultimately society is safer, when the public is empowered to help police by providing solid information. Digital billboards are another tool to empower the public to enhance public safety.

I have more than 25 years of experience in law enforcement. I appreciated the speed, the reach, and the effectiveness of the digital billboards in resolving this matter. This case shows that digital billboards can be an important and effective law enforcement tool in time critical matters, and provide a boost to community safety.

I thank Bill Platko and Clear Channel Outdoor for helping resolve this important case. I also applaud the outdoor advertising industry for helping federal, state, and local law enforcement by posting vital information on billboards.

Like the outdoor advertising industry, the US Marshals Service also works closely with law enforcement agencies and with America's Most Wanted.

Congratulations on your willingness to lend a hand, and the effectiveness of your medium in contributing to the overall community.

*Peter J. Elliott is US Marshal, Northern District of Ohio. Bill Platko is president/general manager, Clear Channel Outdoor, Cleveland.*

## INSIDE

Public Affairs Roundup.....	2
ROAD Warriors.....	2
Member Recruitment Month.....	2
Mobility Trends Remain Heavy.....	3
Eye Catcher.....	3
Ad Clubs Learn About the Future.....	3

**Wednesday, July 15, 2009**  
**Webinar:** Report from The Hill,  
2:00 pm EDT

**Thursday, September 10, 2009**  
**Webinar:** FHWA Report,  
2:00 pm EDT

**Thursday, October 8, 2009**  
Sunset Strip Billboard Honors  
6:00 pm PST  
Los Angeles, CA

**Wednesday, October 14, 2009**  
OAAA Board of Directors Mtg.,  
12:00 pm EST  
Washington, DC

**Sunday-Tuesday, May 2-4, 2010**  
TAB/OAAA Conference  
Phoenix, AZ

# Public Affairs Roundup

## Sotomayor and Billboards

The US Senate is likely to confirm President Obama's nomination of Federal Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the nine-member Supreme Court. As an appeals court judge, Sotomayor ruled on cases pertaining to outdoor advertising.

In 2004, Sotomayor issued the opinion for a unanimous three-judge US Circuit Court panel that decided Lamar Advertising of Penn, LLC v. Town of Orchard Park. Lamar challenged the constitutionality of a municipal ordinance.

When the town amended its ordinance after the suit was filed, the complaint was dismissed by the federal trial court.

On appeal, Judge Sotomayor and her colleagues found that Lamar was entitled to sue with respect to the other allegations it had raised and should have the opportunity to amend its complaint.

In 2003, Sotomayor was a member of the three-judge panel that ruled on a free speech case from Staten Island. A

church bought billboard space to promote an anti-homosexual message. The billboard operator removed the controversial creative after a local political leader expressed disapproval, prompting the church to sue on constitutional grounds.

The federal trial court dismissed the church's complaint, but the appeals panel that included Sotomayor reversed the dismissal and sent the case back to the lower court to determine whether coercive governmental power was used to suppress speech.

OAAA Counsel Eric Ruben analyzed these cases, concluding that "Judge Sotomayor strains to make sure plaintiffs at least get their day in court."

## Progress in SC

On July 6, the planning commission in Richland County, SC, voted 5-2 for an ordinance to allow digital billboards. Richland County surrounds Columbia.

Now the proposed ordinance proceeds to the county council for a second reading; it passed by a vote of 7-4 after the first reading.

## Digital in NH

State officials in New Hampshire have begun issuing permits for digital billboards in the state; three digital signs are operating. For more information, contact Kerry Yoakum (kyoakum@oaaa.org) at 202-833-5566.

## Data Mapping Service

The outdoor industry is using computer mapping techniques to showcase the importance of billboards to local economies.

Easy-to-read mapping reports show the number of advertisers using billboards in a state or local jurisdiction, and the number of people employed at those businesses.

The OAAA contract with iMapData ran through June 30, 2009. Prior to the end of the contract, OAAA captured state and local mapping information which is available upon request.

If you'd like a report, contact Kerry Yoakum (kyoakum@oaaa.org) at 202-833-5566.

## ROAD Warriors

The Hartman Center at Duke University has received a \$60,000 grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission for the purpose of scanning more than 24,000 outdoor advertising images.

The digital images will be added to the ROAD (Resource of Outdoor Advertising Description) online database. The project will include the digitization of mainly materials from the OAAA archive.

The Hartman Center is the only repository actively documenting outdoor advertising and its impact on American society. Several outdoor col-

lections comprise the Outdoor Advertising Archive with the OAAA collection representing the largest portion.

Visit the collection at <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/road/>.



## July is Member Recruitment Month

During the summer, OAAA will reach out to nonmember companies to bring them into the fold.

You can help us unite the industry by recommending companies who you know are doing business in the outdoor industry (i.e. outdoor media companies, suppliers, law firms, and financial firms), but are not part of the association.

Send your recommendations to Marci Werlinich (mwerlinich@oaaa.org).

## Mobility Trends Remain Heavy

According to a recent study issued by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the nation's largest university-based transportation research facility, traffic congestion has lessened nominally as a result of the current recession.

"It's temporary," said TTI research specialist Bernie Fette. "As goes the American economy, so goes traffic."

The organization began tracking traffic trends in 1982, and by every measure, congestion has increased substantially in those 25 years.

Researchers surveying 439 urban centers in the United States found travelers spent one hour less stuck in traffic in 2007 than they did in 2006 and wasted one less gallon of gasoline.

Congestion delay per traveler per year in 1982 was 13.8 hours. By 2005, that number had almost tripled to 37.4 hours.

That number was slightly down to 36.1 hours in 2007, representing a "rare break in near-constant growth," the report said.

Because the changes were nominal, people may not have noticed any change in their commutes. "The aver-

age person still needs 25 percent more time to travel during rush hour than during other parts of the day," Fette said.

Among the report's other findings:

- American travelers still wasted 4.2 billion hours stuck in rush-hour traffic jams. That amounts to nearly one full work week for every traveler.
- The overall cost, based on wasted fuel and lost productivity, reached \$87.3 billion in 2007, according to the report. That's more than \$750 per person.
- The amount of wasted fuel from sitting idle with the motor running topped 2.8 billion gallons, or three weeks' worth of gas, for every traveler. Congestion has slowed but the report says that "things are getting worse slower, hardly a positive goal statement."

The Urban Mobility Report database includes a few examples of other recessions in the past.

In every case, when the economy rebounded, so did the congestion problem.

## Ad Clubs Learn About The Future

EYES ON measurement and the continued deployment of digital billboards where among the main topics discussed during recent OAAA presentations to the AAF Metro Phoenix and AAF Fort Worth ad clubs. Both seminars, filled to capacity, listened to lunchtime presentations that focused on the investments and innovations occurring in the outdoor business despite a deep recession.

Following a 45-minute presentation in Phoenix, OAAA chief marketing officer Stephen Freitas led a spirited panel discussion featuring three Phoenix market general managers representing CBS Outdoor, Clear Channel Outdoor, and American Outdoor. In Fort Worth, the audience engaged in lively questioning after the presentation. While in the markets, OAAA also conducted EYES ON education for local outdoor company sales teams.

Contact Stephen Freitas (s Freitas@oaaa.org) at 202-833-5566 to make arrangements for lectures and educational training in your market.

## Eye Catcher



General Motors wanted to do something spectacular to announce the company's intention to produce the Chevrolet Volt, the first car that could go 40 miles without using a drop of gas.

Creative agency Campbell-Ewald was up to the challenge, but surprisingly, the idea for the big creative risk came from GM itself.

"Our client actually came up with the idea to do a 3D board instead of a 2D one," said the agency. "We were worried about the cost, but we knew the Volt deserved a big idea, and we were glad we listened to her."

**oaaa**

Outdoor Outlook is produced by the OAAA as a member service. Previous issues can be found at [www.oaaa.org](http://www.oaaa.org).