

Tips and Trends

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To Phillip Calvert <PCalvert@faulkner.edu>

You don't often get email from jimrechel-icje.org@shared1.ccsend.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

December | 2025



INSTITUTE FOR
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
EDUCATION

We Are All Targets*

Ella Cook was a target...and so were so many other innocent lives taken in the last year. We are a society that has lost respect for one another, for the moral foundations of our country's founding, and for the respect for life.

For each of us, we must take the time in our own circle of life to ensure that God is at the center of all we do. Only when He is the focus of what we do in our jobs, in our communities, in our families and in our life on this Earth, will the senseless violence end. And for those that choose otherwise, there must be consequences.

God sent His son into the world to redeem us from our sins; we need to work harder than ever to get those without God at the center of their life to see His light.

Please keep the Cook family, and all the innocent victims of violent deaths in your prayers during the Christmas season.

**Editorial Opinion Added December 17, 2025 at 8:47pm*

Working Together to Stay a Step Ahead

As 2025 draws to a close, the work of protecting our communities doesn't slow down. Law enforcement and private-sector professionals continue to adapt to evolving fraud and security threats.

As we head into 2026, ICJE remains committed to supporting that effort through training, collaboration, and shared experience.

Every day, the men and women protecting our communities—whether wearing a badge, managing a branch, or securing a business—face new challenges. Fraudsters adapt quickly. Safety concerns evolve. What worked last year may no longer hold up against today's threats. But one thing hasn't changed: when we work together, we get stronger.

Here in Alabama, and our neighbors in Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi, cooperation between law enforcement and the private sector makes a real difference. From investigating financial fraud to improving frontline safety

ICJE's mission is simple—help those on the front lines keep their skills sharp and their awareness high. Through low- and no-cost training across the region, ICJE connects professionals who might not otherwise cross paths. A single class often brings together officers, bankers, security managers, and investigators—all sharing stories, strategies, and lessons that stick long after the training ends.

As we prepare for 2026, now is the perfect time to refresh our focus on training and collaboration. Whether you're preventing fraud, responding to safety concerns, or mentoring the next generation of professionals, your work matters—and ICJE is here to help strengthen it.

Because when we learn together, we protect together. And that's how we stay a step ahead.

From the ICJE Board, we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

May God bless each of you,

procedures, success depends on staying informed and united. That's where the Institute for Criminal Justice Education (ICJE) steps in.

Jim Rechel
ICJE Newsletter Editor
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Please feel free to email comments or suggestions.

Thanks, Jim

2025 ICJE Highlights

2025 continued our growth, as we continued to provide educational opportunities to law enforcement and private sector parties.



Highlights include:

LECC

Expanded our partnership with the US Attorney's offices in Alabama to sponsor the annual LECC Conference

ACTIVATE

Partnered with the Department of Corrections to supplement preparation of potential Corrections Officers in order to ensure that more candidates were successful in completing the training and certification to become officers,

REPEAT OFFENDER Initiatives

Explored new and creative opportunities to work on programs to reduce the challenge of repeat offenders, and

EDUCATION and TRAINING

Offered training and education throughout out the year

As we celebrate Christmas next week, and other holiday traditions this time of year, we all have friends and loved ones who have passed on, but who left a legacy created by a commitment to make this world a better place in which to live. We remember them.

As we turn the calendar into 2026, we hope that **ICJE** can continue to provide value to you and your organizations.

May God bless each of you.



Dr. Louis M. Harris, Jr.

ICJE Remembers

3 years ago this week, on December 20, 2022, Lou Harris (Dr. Harris to his students at Faulkner and Huntingdon) lost his battle with cancer.

He and Bob Thetford founded ICJE upon their retirement from the FBI.

Both Lou and Bob were committed to giving back to the community by providing training and education to law enforcement personnel in Alabama, especially focused on departments with limited educational budgets. ICJE was born!

ICJE has expanded its mission over the years to include all stakeholders, private and public, who could benefit from educational opportunities involving all aspects of criminal justice, and its iterations.

Watch for new offerings in 2026!

LEADERSHIP



How Culture Shapes Critical Thinking: Unpacking Cultural Logic and Rationality -

Discover how culture shapes critical thinking. Unpack cultural logic and rationality to understand how different societies approach reasoning and judgment.

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Technology



Air Fryer App Caught Asking for Voice Data (re-air) (Lock and Code S06E24)

This week on the Lock and Code podcast, we revisit three stories about smart devices that want to collect more data than people may know. With Christmas gifts galore preloaded with AI and other tech, this is a good podcast for those interested in how the tech world is using data.

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OpenAI's Sam Altman Warns of AI-driven Fraud Crisis

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Exclusive |Granny loses life savings to online scam - and she's placing the blame on banks: Lawsuit

Upper East Sider Nina Mortellito, 86, withdrew a total of approximately \$700,000 for the sick scammers, according to a lawsuit filed Friday in Manhattan Supreme Court.

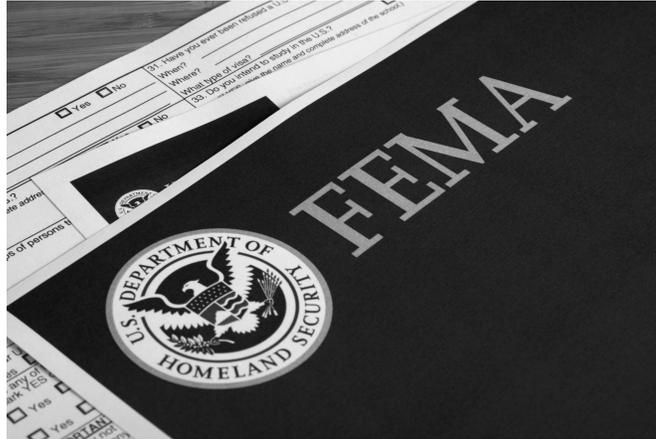
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Police Departments Across North Alabama Utilizing Drone Technology to Fight Crime

Many departments in the area explained how drones are helping with arrests, finding missing persons, and protecting officers.

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FEMA Announces New Counter-UAS Grant Program to Empower Cities, Towns and Villages

Cities and their law enforcement agencies are adapting to an increasingly complex threat environment as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), colloquially known as drones, become part of everyday life.

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The Fraudster Glossary

The Fraudster Glossary

By Eric Huber

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Another Good Glossary of Terms from Malwarebytes

Find the list of cybersecurity terms explained from A to Z here.

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Crime and Society



Thieves Using High Tech Tool to Steal Cars

Alex Rozier reports on the tablets and antennas car thieves are using to start up the vehicles they've broken into. Police say the thieves in some cases are connecting to key fobs that give them access to start the car and drive away.

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Drones Threaten Prison Security by Delivering Contraband across Georgia

Prisons can not shoot down the drones even when they appear over protected areas like prisons, because the aircraft are protected by federal law.

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Gang Violence in Montgomery: A Growing Crisis Demanding Urgent Action

October 17, 2025 - MONTGOMERY, AL - Montgomery, a city steeped in civil rights history and Southern charm, is facing a modern crisis that threatens its communities and public safety: the rising prevalence of gang violence. Once considered a peripheral issue, gang-related crime has surged into the spotlight in 2025, prompting concern from residents,...

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"Believe"

As I was writing this edition of the newsletter, Ella Cook, an Alabama native was identified as one of the two students killed at Brown University. In the midst of all the festivities surrounding Christmas, I cannot imagine the crushing news her parents received, as well as families of the soldiers killed in Syria. All our



tragic, and tug at the thought of celebrating when a loved one is taken so young.

I am reminded of a song by Brooks and Dunn with the following lyrics:

Oh, I raise my hands, bow my head
I'm findin' more and more truth, in the words written in red
They tell me that there's more to life
Than just what I can see
Oh, **I believe, I believe.**

And the magic of Christmas was captured in the movie "Polar Express" with another version for the concept of "Believing". A friend sings with a chorus that compiled their version of "Believe".

When life deals out tragedy, it's the words written in red that create the magic of Christmas!

Believe - the Southern Gateway Chorus

We hope you all enjoy SGC's very first virtual chorus number, Believe.

[Watch Here](#)

Training and Education



Training Schedule

ICJE - Institute for Criminal Justice Education, Inc.

The Institute for Criminal Justice Education is a nonprofit Alabama corporation that provides law enforcement training, develops courses and distributes research material relating to investigation, management and technology in the criminal justice arena. Our services are furnished to governmental, corporate and security agencies who have a primary law enforcement function or a need for security protection.

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