

## FBI, OOH Industry Celebrate 10-Year Partnership

November 20, 2017



A brainstorming idea 10 years ago from an FBI Citizens Academy – to put fugitives’ faces on digital billboards – has solved dozens of tough crime cases.

“We are always looking for creative ways to enable folks, creative ways to solve the crime, and digital billboards are a perfect example of that,” said FBI Assistant Director (AD) Stephen E. Richardson (Criminal Investigative Division).

In 2007, a graduate of the FBI Citizens Academy in Philadelphia who worked for a billboard company volunteered to display fugitives’ pictures on digital billboards, a new OOH format at that time.

The idea worked in [Philadelphia](#) and quickly expanded into a national partnership between the FBI and the OOH industry, which donates the space. The FBI has resolved 57 cases based directly on information prompted by digital billboard publicity.

On November 7, AD Richardson spoke to the OAAA Board of Directors. He thanked the industry for helping law enforcement and encouraged its leaders to participate in FBI Citizens Academies.

Law enforcement has long sought the public’s help via media. In 1950, the FBI launched its “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” program with mugshots in newspapers. Thomas James Holden, who at the time was number one on the FBI’s list, was [apprehended in Oregon](#) after he was recognized by someone who had seen his picture in a newspaper.

With increased use of digital technology, the FBI has turned to unique media partnerships, such as digital billboards, to publicize fugitives and empower the public to help law enforcement.

“In times of crisis, in times of national emergency, if we’re looking for bad guys or bad gals, we use the billboard system in order to get the message out to the public,” added Richardson. [Watch a video featuring AD Richardson.](#)

### Examples of Success

The FBI activated digital billboards in Las Vegas after the October 1 mass shooting seeking information from the public about the shooter and the crime, prompting more than 4,000 tips.

[Authorities credited digital billboards](#) with helping find the East Coast Rapist in 2011, after a long, multi-state manhunt.



*This suspect was [identified](#) after his photo appeared on digital billboards and was apprehended.*



*Digital Billboards helped lead authorities to the East Coast Rapist.*