Forensic Management Through Turmoil

• This will be a general presentation about our recent management experiences in Wisconsin.

• The presentation will cover how we used change to improve the crime laboratory bureau.

• It will also cover ideas about repairing communication internally after massive change over a short period.
Wisconsin Department of Justice Crime Laboratory Bureau

• The Bureau was established in 1946.
• The Bureau is composed of three crime Laboratories.
• There are about 170 employees in the Bureau.
Forensic Management Through Turmoil – January 2011

• Significant retirements Bureau wide in fear of changes to come.
• No management in the Madison Crime Laboratory. New supervisor in the Wausau Laboratory.
• Long standing vacancies in management.
• Lack of sufficient management in critical areas.
• Numerous long standing personnel issues.
Turning Turmoil into Success – The Players

• New Administrator appointed for the Department of Law Enforcement Services two weeks after my appointment.
• New Administrator has a police background and is well versed in and supportive of crime laboratories.
• Only one seasoned Laboratory Manager in the Bureau who is supportive of change.
Turning Turmoil into Success - Personnel

• Attorney General and Governor support 6 additional DNA scientists in the 2011 budget.
• Two new DNA supervisors added to Bureau.
• Laboratory Manager appointed for the Madison Crime Laboratory.
• New position of Bureau Quality Manager established and filled.
• New position of Deputy Director established and filled.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Personnel Issues

• Governor Walker virtually eliminates state unions.

• New Administrator and Human Resources support addressing personnel issues.

• Long standing personnel issues addressed across the Bureau resulting in terminations, resignations, and demotions.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Instrumentation

• Budget and Grants effectively leveraged to replace critical instrumentation in non DNA areas.

• Attorney General grants special funding for critical instrumentation.

• A million dollars are spent on new and/or replacement instrumentation over a two year cycle, all non DNA.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Salary

• Bureau was suffering from chronic vacancies and a failure to retain scientists.
• Salary increases authorized for DNA scientists in 2012.
• Salary increases authorized for non DNA scientists in 2013
• Aggressive processes introduced to advance employees as soon as possible.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Structure

• New Milwaukee Laboratory moving forward with a 120,000 square foot facility. Current laboratory in inadequate and unsafe.

• All felons legislation in process which includes and expansion of the Madison Crime Laboratory.

• Process may be in place to combine other forensic services in to the Crime Laboratory Bureau.
Turning Turmoil into Success – DNA Backlogs

• New evidence guidelines developed, piloted, and deployed for DNA state wide.
• Touch DNA restricted to best 3 samples and general DNA cases limited to best 5 samples on initial submissions.
• Similar guidelines developed for other sections.
Turning Turmoil into Success – DNA Backlogs the Results

- Massive training of customers on new guidelines.
- Backlogs begin to drop.
- Goals was a 30 to 40 day turn around on DNA cases.
- Present turn time is 30 days or less on DNA cases.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Other Backlogs

• Better case management and productivity management now employed in all areas.
• Toxicology and Firearms/Toolmarks backlogs eliminated. Latent Prints and Chemistry underway. Questioned Documents services being outsourced to FBI.
• Productivity standards established.
• Laboratory Management held accountable for case load.
Turning Turmoil into Success – Customer Outreach

• Aggressive communication with external customers on goals and results.
• Constant presence at state criminal justice meetings.
• Raising the profile of the Crime Laboratory Bureau within the state and nationally.
Eliminating Turmoil – The Next Step

• Extreme change and demands on employees over the last two years.
• Moral can be low because of this and addressing personnel issues. ‘Who’s next’ mentality.
• After such change, establishing positive internal communication is essential.
• Goal is to clearly communicate goals and gather input so that all understand.
Turning Turmoil to Cutting Edge Forensics

• Rapid change over a prolonged period can result in a staff conditioned for future change.

• Bureau is now moving forward with research, development, and process improvement on a continuous basis.

• Our goal is to be the best Crime Laboratory organization in the nation.