Dear Colleagues,

ASCLD fulfills a number of roles that we cannot fill individually as crime lab leaders. By coming together through our organization, we can pool our joint expertise to further our shared forensic science mission on behalf of the entirety of our client population. We are our own best resource.

ASCLD has stepped up in providing a number of innovative educational initiatives, which permits our membership to further sharpen their skills and increase awareness of our ever changing forensic landscape. Two of our member experts, Matthew Gamette (ASCLD Advocacy Chair, President Elect) and Gerry LaPorte (NIJ Office of Investigative and Forensic Services Director), are hosting a webinar providing education on the Justice for All Act and the Coverdale Grant Process. The webinar will be held on Tuesday, July 11th at 2:00 EDT. Please see our Crime Lab Minute article for further details.

Upcoming educational initiatives feature the next iteration of our Leadership Academy as well as a variety of topical webinars addressing emerging issues as well as ongoing education. Please take advantage of these opportunities to build your skills as well as developing your lab's future leaders.

Ray

Past President David Stafford

It is with sorrow that we share with our membership the notification of the passing of Dr. David T. Stafford, Past President of ASCLD. Dr. Stafford passed away a few weeks ago at the age of 82. In his early years, Dr. Stafford worked as a nuclear chemist for Oak Ridge National Laboratory and he researched radioactive fuels for the Department of Energy. He later became a toxicologist for Shelby County, TN (Memphis) coroner’s office and he wrote the toxicology report on Elvis Presley. As Director of the Chemical Pathology and Toxicology Lab at the University of Tennessee (Memphis), he taught forensic pathology and as a contractor to Hewlett Packard, he traveled extensively helping crime labs come to terms with gas chromatographs and mass spectrometers. In his later years, Dr. Stafford served as a professional witness testifying in many forensic cases.

His son-in-law, John Malik, wrote a heart felt eulogy to Dr. Stafford the night he passed away, http://chefjohnmalik.com/tears-of-his-daughter/

Please make a note of the new mailing address:
ASCLD Office
Thank you for your prompt attention.

Rapid DNA Technology Forum
When: August 15th - 17th, 2017 from 8am - 5:30pm EST
Where: The Alexandrian in Old Town, Alexandria, VA

The FTCoE will host the Rapid DNA Technology Forum on August 15-17, 2017 in Alexandria, VA. Rapid DNA technology has quickly advanced over the

Forensic Science Lecturers (2), University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY, Expires: August 31, 2017

Staff Chemist, ORAU (Oak Ridge Associated Universities), Charlottesville, VA and OCONUS, Expires: September 29, 2017

Forensic Scientist II, Scottsdale Police Department, Scottsdale, AZ, Expires: July 23, 2017

Forensic Scientist I, Scottsdale Police Department, Scottsdale, Arizona, Expires: July 23, 2017

Impression Evidence/Latent Print Discipline – Forensic Scientist 1, Idaho State Police, Meridian, Idaho, Expires: July 19, 2017


Forensic (Latent Print) Examiner, Raleigh/Wake City-County Bureau of Identification, Raleigh, Expires: July 21, 2017

Post doctoral scholar, The Pennsylvania State University, Forensic Science Program, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, University Park, PA, Expires: August 31, 2017

Forensic Analyst II – Priority DNA, Sorenson Forensics, Salt Lake City, UT, Expires: July 19, 2017

Criminalist (Journey or Senior DOQ), Solano County, Fairfield, CA, Expires: July 21, 2017

Latent Print Laboratory Director, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Albany, NY, Expires: September 15, 2017

Forensic Science Policy and Management: An International Journal
http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ufpm20/current
The webinar will present the results of the evaluation of Direct Sample Analysis Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometry to provide rapid identification of eight fentanyl analogues and related synthetic opiates. This webinar series will bring a multifaceted perspective to how diverse criminal justice disciplines are addressing these challenges; sharing their knowledge; and advancing science, technology and law. Dealing with the impacts of the opioid crisis to the criminal justice system require better reporting, surveillance, research, technology and policy than are currently in use. The need to understand the epidemic and its effects goes beyond knowing your own profession — it takes a global perspective to fully act and make a difference.

Click HERE to find out more and Register!

Episode 9 Podcast!!
Just Blood Spatter

In episode nine of Just Science, funded by the National Institute of Justice’s Forensic Technology Center of Excellence [Award 2016-MU-BX-K110], we spoke with Dr. Marc Smith, from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Smith’s NIJ funded research in blood spatter has connected computational fluid dynamics with empirical studies to improve the understanding of blood spatter onto solid, slanted surfaces. His work looks at many variables, including droplet size, speed, surface roughness and wettability. Listen and Subscribe HERE.

Subscribe to the channel at:
Google Play
iTunes
Stitcher
Soundcloud

S. 2577 (114th): Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2016
https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/s2577

2016 Justice for All Act: What You Need to Know - hosted by A2LA
July 11, 2017, Tuesday, 2:00pm to 3:00pm Eastern Daylight Time

Matthew Gamette, Laboratory Director of the Idaho State Police Forensic Science Services, will be joining to provide an informational overview of the Justice for All Act, signed in December 2016. Attendees can expect to leave with an understanding of its effects on forensic science services providers and practitioners. Gerry LaPorte, Director of the Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences, NIJ, will be joining to provide an informational overview of the Coverdell Grant Process and the role accreditation plays in this process. Attendees can expect to leave with a basic understanding of the accreditation process and how an organization’s accredited status will be considered as part of their application to the Coverdell Grant.

BFMTS News

NFSTC is now offering online proficiency testing in crime scene investigation to agencies across the globe. After the Fact has been used as the competency standard since 2011 and is a cost-effective training tool. Assessments are $250 and available at www.csi-skills.com.

michelle.chernicoff@nfstc.org
https://www.nfstc.org/

June 2017 Newsletter

OSAC Promotes Hundreds of Forensic Science Standards, Guidelines, and Other Documents During 2017 OSAC Public Status Reports & Open Discussions

The webcasts and PowerPoint presentations are available for public viewing
The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) has received funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation to develop software that will transfer data from forensic Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) to FORESIGHT, a business quantitative process tailored to forensic laboratories.

The goal of the project, called FORESIGHT 20/20, will be to allow laboratories to easily upload business-relevant information from their individual LIMS to the FORESIGHT project, hosted at West Virginia University.

Software development and installations for JusticeTrax Alpha labs is progressing. The software provides a dashboard of the labs' own stats and FORESIGHT stats, among other information. The information, formatting, and interface may vary somewhat by vendor.
His name was Wilmer Souder. A physicist at the National Bureau of Standards, now known as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Souder played an important role in the early days of forensic science. He helped send countless murderers, bootleggers, gangsters and thieves to prison, and he kept such a low profile partly out of concern for his and his family’s safety. Perhaps as a result, he was not long remembered for his forensic work, and his influence on the developing field of forensic science was not as great as it might have been.

NIST Library just finished scanning Souder’s nine notebooks and has made them available for anyone to view via the NIST Digital Archives:

http://nisdigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16009coll67

Bringing together experts from the forensic, research, legal, and law enforcement communities to strengthen forensic science and create a safer, more just society.

https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science

Upcoming Events

International Forensic Science Error Management Symposium
July 24-28, 2017

Establishment of an Office of Forensic Sciences and a Forensic Science Board Within the Department of Justice
Revision 2/14/17


Formed in 2000, CFSO is an association of six forensic science professional organizations: American Academy of Forensic Sciences; American Society of Crime Lab Directors; International Association for Identification; International Association of Forensic Nurses; National Association of Medical Examiners; and Society of Forensic Toxicologists - American Board of Forensic Toxicology.

These professional organizations together represent more than 21,000 forensic science professionals across the United States.

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice in matters of mutual interest to its member organizations, to influence public policy at the national level and to make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories.

West Virginia University Forensic Management Academy

The chemistry behind the opioid epidemic
Andy Brunning
C&EN; 95(24); p. 24; June 6, 2017

NIJ Forensic Science R&D Reports for ASCLD Crime Lab Minute Vol 10

These research reports have been submitted by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) especially for their relevance to crime laboratory activities. ASCLD has not reviewed nor does it necessarily endorse the findings of this research.

Report: NIJ’s DNA Analysis, Capacity Enhancement
This report summarizes NIJ’s approach to improving forensic science includes long term strategic advances and necessary immediate relief to address the challenges of satisfying increasing demand for DNA analysis. From 2008 to 2014, the turnaround time for analysis has remained nearly constant, while testing capacity increased by over 60 percent. Average cost per case has decreased from $1,279 in 2007 to $607 in 2014. And since 2009, uploads of DNA profiles to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) have increased 143 percent. The need for this assistance has never been greater, through capacity building, technical assistance, research, development, evaluation and dissemination, NIJ is working to address the challenges experienced by forensic laboratories.

Tune in to the FTCoE Just Science Podcast!

NIJ’s Forensic Technology Center of Excellence has launched Just Science, a podcast for forensic science professional and others interested in learning how crime laboratories are working to produce more accurate results, become more efficient and solve more crimes. The podcast covers every forensic science discipline. Recent episodes discussed lab management, human factors, 3D optical topography, subjective probability, DNA mixture interpretations and economics and crime labs.

The Evidence for Very Small Particles

NIJ recently published an article in Forensics discussing the work of Stoney Forensic in developing an investigatory technique called “very small particle analysis.” This approach involves the careful examination of dust on an object to trace it back to its original location, or the comparison of two or more objects to determine if they have, at some point, been in the same place. The researchers have successfully used this analysis to support U.S. government agencies and local and international law enforcement investigations, for example to trace the origins of illegal shipments of elephant tusks.

Developing Reliable Methods for Microbial Fingerprinting of Soils

Soil evidence has the potential of being a valuable tool for linking a suspect, victim, or item to a crime scene. Currently, however, only class characteristics of soil are considered in traditional analysis. This NIJ-supported research project examined the utility of soil bacterial profiling via next-generation sequencing of the 16S rRNA gene to identify a soil’s origin. The researchers successfully differentiated soil samples from diverse and similar habitats back to their location of origin 100 percent of time in multidimensional space and 87.5 percent of time through supervised classification. The success in tracing soils back to a location of origin demonstrates the potential of next-generation sequencing of bacteria, in conjunction with a combination of robust statistical techniques, for the individualization of forensic soil samples.

Quantitative Algorithm for the Digital Comparison of Torn Duct Tape

Researchers from University of California, Davis sought to minimize human contextual bias in decisions about whether torn duct tape found at a crime scene matches a suspect or item to a crime scene. Currently, however, only class characteristics of soil are considered in traditional analysis. This NIJ-supported research project examined the utility of soil bacterial profiling via next-generation sequencing of the 16S rRNA gene to identify a soil’s origin. The researchers successfully differentiated soil samples from diverse and similar habitats back to their location of origin 100 percent of time in multidimensional space and 87.5 percent of time through supervised classification. The success in tracing soils back to a location of origin demonstrates the potential of next-generation sequencing of bacteria, in conjunction with a combination of robust statistical techniques, for the individualization of forensic soil samples.

Grant Assistance for DNA

Coming soon...... The Forensic Research Committee

An opportunity to work at JusticeTrax doesn’t come around very often. We have a Software Tester position open! This one is going to go fast!

Please read about the opening at https://justicetrax.com/employment/

The Software Tester basic function is to validate the quality of JusticeTrax products. The Software Tester finds weaknesses in the products in an efficient and timely manner so that Software Developers can resolve them before customers experience a problem. The position reports to the Quality Manager.
Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs: Policy, Law Enforcement, and Diversion Tactics

The goal of this University of Central Florida study was to determine whether Florida law HB 7095 and related legislation reduced the number of pain clinics abusively dispensing opioid prescriptions in the State, as well as to assess the logistics of administering the law. The findings presented in this NUJ-supported report indicate that the Florida effort against rampant “pill mills” was largely successful, which is consistent with research that has documented reductions in opioid-related deaths in Florida. Further, the findings show the key role of interagency cooperation in the success of the legislation, which in conjunction with Florida’s legislation, should be considered a model for future efforts in reducing easy access to prescription opioids.

Differential Sampling of Footwear to Separate Evidentiary Particles from Background Noise

This NUJ-supported project by Stoney Forensic tested the ability to separate particle signals on the footwear soles using differential analysis of loosely held, moderately held, and strongly held particle fractions. Prior research has used a generalized sampling of particles on footwear soles from both contact and recessed areas shows the retention of particles from earlier contacts. The current study determined that although particles on the contact surfaces of footwear were removed and replaced, particles on the more recessed areas of the sole were not. Three environmental exposure sites were chosen to have different characteristic particle types (soil minerals) and shoes of two types (work boots and tennis shoes) were tested. Some shoes were exposed to only one environment, and others were exposed to all three in one of six sequences. Sampling methods were developed to separate particles from the contact surface of the shoe based on how tightly they were held to the sole.

Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) and Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) Analyses of Paper, Inks, and Soils

Florida International University researchers sought to demonstrate the utility of an analytical chemistry tool that is relatively new to forensic laboratories, Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS), in conducting elemental analysis of ink, paper, and soil evidence quickly and with little or no sample preparation. The commercial LIBS instrumental results were compared to previously optimized in-house LIBS systems and also to the alternative forensic tools, which offer good analytical performance but suffer from either very high costs and significant complexity (in the case of LS-ICP-MS) or analytical limitations in the form of sample requirement and relatively high detection limits (in the case of mXRF and SEM-EDS). Although less mature than LA-ICP-MS, LIBS also shares the benefits associated with laser ablation methods, with the added advantage of improved speed, versatility, ease of operation, affordability, and portability. This NUJ-supported project shows that both LA-ICP-MS and LIBS are useful analytical tools for the analysis of paper, inks, soils, and cotton.

Method Validation for a Statistically Based Comparison of Tool Marks using GelSight-Based Three Dimensional Imaging and Novel Comparison Algorithms for Forensic Forensics

TopMatch technology for structural 3D imaging and comparison of cartridge casings shows excellent and continually improving match accuracy; however, in order to fully establish the base credibility of the platform, it was necessary to establish best-scanning practices and to demonstrate that the method meets the quality-control criteria of other forensic instruments. This NUJ-supported project by Cadre Research Labs aimed to enhance TopMatch by establishing best practices and conducting a set of methodology studies. The project complements the previous studies on accuracy and evidence stability by addressing the remaining issues of precision, repeatability, reproducibility, contamination risk, and

Forensic Science Research Digest

Volume 1, Issue 4, May 2017

NEWS STORIES

Forensic Experts Granted ‘Qualified Immunity’ for 1990s Bite Marks Testimony

The district court threw out the suits against Steven Timothy Hayne and Michael H. West, the forensic experts, claiming that they had immunity from such suits. But now a federal appeals court has again held that both experts are covered under “qualified immunity”—even though their testimony is now viewed as negligent.

Murder of Teen Found Gagged in Bathtub Solved 40 Years Later with M-Vac DNA Collection

The M-Vac System, a wet vacuum DNA collection method, pulled McCabe’s DNA off the halter top gag, decades after police carefully preserved it as evidence, according to authorities. It was the break that finally allowed them to catch up with the long-free killer.

“We are always looking for that piece of the puzzle that will make the difference,” said Greg Wilking, a detective and spokesman of the Salt Lake City Police Department. “In the Sharon Schollmeyer case, the M-Vac came through for us and produced a full DNA profile that we didn’t have before, which led
performance checks. In addition, researchers studied the effects of cleaning protocols, focus variation, and ambient lighting variation.

Measuring the Frequency Occurrence of Handwriting and Hand-Printing Characteristics
One of the basic axioms of handwriting comparison is that no two writers use the exact same set of handwriting characteristics. The database created by NIJ-supported researchers and the resulting frequency occurrence proportions provide the forensic and judicial communities with some empirical data with which to assess this axiom. The specific approach in collecting samples that match the U.S. demographically provides unique insight and substantive data on the quantitative relationship between the presence/absence of readily identifiable features and key demographic factors as noted by Huber and Headrick (age, gender, ethnicity, education, location of second/third grade schooling, and handedness) while controlling for other factors, such as temporal state and geographic locations. The original set of specimens collected from a wide spectrum of participants provided an initial large collection that was eventually pared down to achieve what is considered a representative sample from the entire target population.

Gunshot Residue in a Non-Firearm Detainee Population
Studies have shown varying amounts of gunshot residue (GSR) in the police environment, with most being on surfaces within facilities occupied and operated by law enforcement. This NIJ-supported study by researchers at the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences examined whether GSR contamination could be found on the hands of detainees at the Harris County Jail (Texas) who were not charged with any offenses related to the discharge of a weapon. Of the 175 samples obtained and tested, not one characteristic GSR particle was found. Coupling the results of this study with one in which no GSR particles were on 100 persons answering bench warrants in Bexar County (Texas) gives an average of less than one GSR particle in 275 hand samples. Considering that a different study of random surfaces within the Chicago Police Department (n=201) found a total of 56 GSR particles, the current study concludes that GSR particles are not readily transferred to surfaces not in close proximity to a recently fired gun.

Comparison of Microspectrophotometry and Fluorescence Excitation-Emission Matrix (EEM) Spectroscopy for Non-Destructive Fiber Examination
When spectral information is used in the study of fiber evidence, variations within a fiber source lead to the recommendation that multiple spectra be collected from each fiber to properly characterize the sample. Although this methodology is sufficient for comparison of profiles with obvious differences, the chemometric methods used in this NIJ-supported study from researchers at the University of Central Florida show higher accuracies than the visual method commonly used in forensic laboratories. Current practices in forensic labs that involve fluorescence microscopy do not take advantage of the information content that exists in the spectral signature of textile fibers. The coupling of a microscope to a spectrophotometer allows for the acquisition of a complete training set of EEMs for fiber dye identification from an individual fiber. Accounting for the variance of the EEM spectra at different regions along the length of the fiber provides a useful training set that can be used as the basis for principal component cluster analysis.

Development of a Mobile, Automated Tool Mark Characterization/Comparison System
This NIJ-supported project developed a portable prototype instrument that provides forensic examiners with the ability to characterize a tool-marked surface, compare the data from that surface to data files obtained from any other surface, and assess the likelihood that the marks on the two surfaces were made by the same tool. To date, the system has been successfully tested on data sets consisting of fully striated marks created from 50 sequentially manufactured screwdrivers, quasi-striated markings to the CODIS hit.”

Amelia Earhart May Have Survived Crash-Landing, Newly Discovered Photo Suggests
Independent analysts told History the photo appears legitimate and unaltered. Shawn Henry, former executive assistant director for the FBI and an NBC News analyst, has studied the photo and feels confident it shows the famed pilot and her navigator.

Reach of Search Warrant for Emails at Issue in Appeals Case
The case is among several legal clashes that Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft and other technology companies have had with the government over questions of digital privacy and authorities’ need for information to combat crime and extremism. Privacy law experts say the companies have been more willing to push back against the government since the leak of classified information detailing America’s surveillance programs.

Missouri Man Cleared in 1997 Sex Assault Case by DNA Evidence
A Missouri man who spent nearly two decades in mental hospitals after entering a disputed plea in the 1997 sexual assault of a teenager has been cleared of the crime after genetic evidence was re-tested and excluded him as a suspect.

Legislature wise to keep crime lab open
The state House of Representatives unanimously approved a budget for the Oregon State Police that will keep open the agency’s crime lab in Pendleton. That lab, the only one of its kind in Eastern Oregon, was slated for closure in Gov. Kate Brown’s proposed budget for the two-year period starting July 1.

Forensic Chemical Analysis of Wood Could Stop Illegal Logging
A new technique has been developed to tackle illegal logging by pinpointing the wood’s origin to a smaller area than ever before.

APD Knew About Moldy Rape Kits Back in April
Mold has been found growing on the exteriors of 849 rape kits being stored inside the Austin Police Department’s evidence warehouse in East Austin, on more than half of the 1,629 untested kits held in that refrigerator. Surging budget for the local lab APD contracted to analyze incoming and backlogged DNA evidence after the lab’s June 2016 shuttering – first discovered the mold on a piece of clothing stored inside a kit. But although they notified APD on April 25, it took two months for word to get out – until a June 27 report in the Austin American-Statesman, six days after Assistant Chief Troy Gay and Commander Mike Eveleth confirmed the issue to local stakeholders during a weekly meeting.

State, Wendgard pitch $75 million crime lab plan in Wauwatosa
The state of Wisconsin and Wendgard Partners are considering a former beer distribution warehouse in Wauwatosa for the site of the new $75 million Southeast Wisconsin Law Enforcement Facility.

New forensics procedures at Contra Costa County Crime Lab speed results
MARTINEZ — The drama, cutting-edge science and police work that keeps “CSI” fans glued to their TVs are happening in real life at the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Department Crime Lab. Operational changes both inside and outside the lab have made it the envy of similar
produced by 50 sequentially manufactured shear-cut pliers, and impression marks produced by 50 sequentially manufactured cold chisels.

**The Interpretation of Patterned Injuries in Medicolegal Death Investigation**

In this report, NIJ-supported researchers describe the results of their survey evaluating the effect of image processing and image quality on the ability of forensic pathologists to accurately interpret images of patterned injury of the skin. The study consisted of three surveys: the first, a collection of “classic” images that most pathologists would diagnose with high consensus; the second, degraded images with lesser resolution poorer composition to determine how degradation affected diagnostic consensus; and the third, images treated with various enhancement techniques to determine whether any benefit was gained. Surprisingly, the first survey produced a median of only 74 percent consensus. An analysis of the second and third surveys demonstrated the importance of context and history in forensic pathologic diagnosis. When provided with history, consensus rose to approximately 96 percent per question (median value) for the matching subset of the first survey.

**Prediction of Drug Interactions with Methadone, Buprenorphine and Oxycodone**

The impact of drug interactions spreads beyond the field of forensic toxicology to encompass general medicine, pharmacy and other areas involved in drug use and dispensing. These can all directly and indirectly impact the criminal justice systems, as many in these professions are called upon as consultants and expert witnesses for cases. Information on potential drug interactions with methadone, buprenorphine, and oxycodone can benefit these fields. A NIJ-supported project by researchers at the University of Utah hypothesized that the inhibition of the metabolism of opioids may contribute to their toxic effects and set out to measure the in vitro inhibition of metabolism of three opioids: methadone, buprenorphine, and oxycodone. This report outlines the progress made optimizing incubation conditions, establishing positive controls and screening inhibitory potential of the three drug classes.

**Evaluation of a Novel Fluorescent Dye to Detect Anogenital Injury in Women of Color**

NIJ-supported researchers at the University of Virginia tested fluorescent dyes to detect sexual assault injuries on different skin colors and tones. Trials were conducted to identify non-toxic suitable dyes that can be easily visualized using equipment already in common use among forensic examiners and will not interfere with subsequent forensic DNA testing. Findings suggest that fluorescein is both safe and feasible to use in detecting genital injury across all skin tones. However, additional research on alternative dyes across all skin tones is recommended.

**Development of an Analytical System for Comparison and Identification of Fiber Dyes**

In order to overcome challenges to generalized fiber characterization, this NIJ-supported research explored a significant range of dyestuffs that span numerous major dye application classes, chemistries, chromophores, and fiber types, using techniques and methodologies currently available in most forensic laboratories. Numerous aspects of dye analysis, from extraction through micro analytical characterization, classification, and identification were examined for a set of 300 commercially prevalent dyestuffs. The results show that dye identification can be conducted using techniques available in many labs. It is anticipated that this research will provide a basis from which laboratories can expand their approach from a generalized comparison of color between questioned and known materials to a specific identification of the colorants present in a sample. This has the potential to increase the significance of results in the prosecution or defense of a case and improve the value of investigative leads in cases for which a comparison sample does not exist by constraining or identifying specific dyes.

**Facilities around the United States, according to Forensic Services Division Chief Pamela Hofssas.** We provide accurate, real-time information,” she said.

**Hatch promotes rapid DNA bill as he tours Utah crime lab**

The bill would lift regulations on collecting DNA samples to allow police officers to conduct cheek swabs on individuals booked into jail and bypass using results only from accredited labs. That could mean more quickly linking suspects to unsolved crimes or exonerating innocent individuals, Hatch said while pitching the bill Thursday.

**Chemist Develops Device to Train Canine Units on Color Detection**

Man's best friend returned to the silver screen this June in the film "Megan Leavey," a story based on the true events about young Marine Megan Leavey and her combat canine, Rex. The film shines light on the importance of canine units throughout the military, whether it is aiding soldiers in combat situations or using their keen sense of smell to detect explosives in the field.

**Manson Family Member Seeks Parole—and Access to Infamous Tex Watson Tapes**

Her bid this time: a September hearing for young offenders presenting the mitigating factors of her crimes back in 1969. The crucial piece of evidence she seeks is already in law enforcement hands. But she’s never heard it, and it’s been subject to years of hard-fought legal battles. They’re the so-called “Tex Watson Tapes”—recordings of a Manson Family killer telling his lawyer how “Helter Skelter” happened.

**Forensic Architecture of the Holocaust Explored in New Exhibit at Royal Ontario Museum**

The Evidence Room, the exhibit that opened recently at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, embodies Robert Jan van Pelt’s detailed and unique analysis of the Holocaust. An architectural historian at the University of Waterloo, he’s written often on the Holocaust, not only proving that it happened but that Auschwitz was carefully planned as a Nazi death site for a million Jews.

**National Victimization Statistical Support Program**

*BJS-2017-11480*

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) seeks an agent to implement the National Victimization Statistical Support Program (NVSSP) project, which is designed to provide scientific and technical support for statistical and methodological research, statistical analyses, documentation, and dissemination related to BJS work on crime and victimization. Specifically, the NVSSP will support general methodological research related to improving the utility and cost effectiveness of BJS’s National Crime Survey.
Trace Metal Analysis by Laser Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry and X-Ray K-Edge Densitometry
This NIJ-supported dissertation by an Iowa State University researcher describes studies on determining trace elements in samples with forensic importance, including trace analysis in lipstick, copper wire, fly larvae and porcine skin tissue for gunshot residue and bullet residue in bones, as well as, soil from decomposed pig carcasses.

Pre-Feedback Eyewitness Statements: Proposed Safeguard against Feedback Effects on Evaluations of Eyewitness Testimony
This NIJ-supported study from an Iowa State University researcher tested pre-feedback statements as a safeguard for protecting against, and correcting for, the effects of confirming feedback on evaluations of eyewitness testimony. Results suggest that confirming feedback did not appear to have any influence on witnesses in the no pre-feedback statements condition. Additionally, confirming feedback did not impair evaluators’ abilities to discriminate between accurate and mistaken eyewitnesses in the conditions in which witnesses provided pre-feedback statements. Witnesses’ pre-feedback statements to evaluators did not improve evaluators’ abilities to discriminate between accurate and mistaken eyewitnesses who received feedback. Finally, evaluators tended to judge witnesses who gave no pre-feedback statements more favorably than they judged witnesses who gave pre-feedback statements.

Victimization Survey (NCVS), including the continued development of the NCVS subnational estimation program; efforts to improve the efficiency of the survey mode and sample design; efforts to enhance the ability to measure emerging crime trends and other issues related to contact with and use of the criminal and civil justice system; and continued research on improving the measurement of sensitive crime types and topics, including rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. BJS intends to fund the NVSSP project through a cooperative agreement for a 3-year period.

Deadline: Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on July 24, 2017.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants are national, regional, state, or local private entities, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community organizations, and federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior that support initiatives to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system. For-profit organizations must forgo any profit or management fee.

Contact Information: For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Grace Kena, BJS Statistician, by telephone at 202-307-0765, or by email at askbjs@usdoj.gov. Include “NVSSP” in the subject line.

Full solicitation in PDF format (PDF 369K)

Census of Medical Examiners and Coroners' Offices
BJS-2017-12660
The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice, seeks applications for the administration of the 2018 Census of Medical Examiners and Coroners' Offices (CMEC). The new census will obtain and update information about operations, workload (including backlogs), staffing, training, policies, and procedures of approximately 2,400 medical examiners and coroners' (ME/C) offices that are responsible for providing medicolegal death investigation (MDI) services to America's criminal justice system. Among other responsibilities, the recipient of funds will act as the data collection agent, update the roster of ME/C offices, revise and update the previous data collection instrument as necessary, administer the 2018 census, and transmit final deliverables and data files to BJS.

Deadline: Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on July 24, 2017.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants are national, regional, state, or local public and private entities, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community organizations, institutions of higher education, federally recognized Indian tribal governments as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, and units of local government that support initiatives to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system. For-profit organizations must forgo any profit or management fee.

Contact Information: For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Connor Brooks, BJS Statistician, by telephone at 202-307-0765 or by email at AskBJS@usdoj.gov. Include “CMEC” in the subject line.
Federal Justice Statistics Analytical Support Program

BJS-2017-127000

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP) collects, standardizes, and publishes statistics about the federal response to crime and the operation of the federal criminal justice system. The FJSP produces annual standard analysis files (SAFs), which document the federal criminal case processing stages from arrest to prosecution, pretrial release, adjudication, sentencing, appeals, and corrections. The FJSP also produces linking files that permit analysis of defendants and cases across stages of the federal criminal justice system. With this solicitation, BJS seeks an agent to implement the Federal Justice Statistics Analytical Support Program (FJSASP) project. This project is designed to provide scientific and technical support to BJS for methodological research, statistical analysis, and the generation of statistical reports using data from the FJSP. In addition, the FJSASP will work with BJS to identify additional sources of data to further enhance the FJSP (e.g., immigration enforcement and court statistics, enforcement data from federal regulatory agencies, civil data from the federal courts, and staffing and budget statistics).

There are three priority areas for this project: (1) using the FJSP data to address pressing substantive questions about the federal justice system through the production of statistical reports, (2) assessing the strengths and shortcomings of the FJSP data for federal criminal justice statistical reporting purposes and proposing and implementing methodological solutions to address deficiencies, and (3) identifying and assisting to integrate outside data sources with FJSP data files.

Deadline: Applicants must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on August 7, 2017.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants are limited to for-profit (commercial) organizations, nonprofit organizations (including tribal nonprofit or for-profit organizations), faith-based and community organizations, and institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education). For-profit organizations (as well as other recipients) must forgo any profit or management fee.

Contact Information: For assistance with any other requirements of this solicitation, contact Mark Motivans, BJS Statistician, by telephone at 202-307-0765, or by email at askbjs@usdoj.gov. Include "2017FJSASP" in the subject line.