



Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

THE SOURCE

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Inside this issue:

Energy Program	2
Director Briefing	3
Task Force Success	3
Victims' Rights	4
Capitol Office	4

OSBI DNA Database Provides Valuable Leads

By Leslie Katzilierakis/DNA Analyst

Today's crimes aren't always solved with traditional investigative work. Science and technology play increasingly vital roles in identifying suspects. The OSBI has many tools in its forensic laboratory that aid investigators. CODIS, our DNA database, is one of the most powerful – hitting on more than 300 samples last year.

CODIS stands for the Combined DNA Index System. This system contains DNA profiles from a variety of sources: crime scene evidence, missing persons, unidentified bodies, and convicted offenders. Every state has its own database, and the FBI collects the profiles from all of the states.

Several times a week, specialized computer software programs search the DNA profiles in the CODIS system against each other. The program seeks to identify matches between profiles that have been entered. It can match DNA profiles from one criminal case to DNA profiles from another criminal case – indicating that the same person was involved in both crimes. By making this type of “evidence to evidence” link, the OSBI can aid investigators from different agencies by connecting their cases.

The system can also match a DNA profile from a crime scene to a convicted offender. This type of hit allows the OSBI to notify the investigator and to provide the name of the offender so that the investigator can interview him/her and determine the connection to the crime scene.

CODIS hits across the nation are responsible for solving thousands of criminal cases a year. In Oklahoma, we are having tremendous success with this system. In 2014, the OSBI processed 376 CODIS hits which provided investigative leads in criminal cases. That is over a hit a day! These hits assisted by providing information related to 15 homicides and 27 sexual assaults. Last year, 269 burglaries were solved by CODIS hits.

CODIS is straight-forward in the information it supplies users and ensures that bias plays no part in the results it provides. It does not contain any personally-identifying information in the system itself. Race, age, and names of the convicted offenders in the system are not included in the CODIS database. Results are based solely on whether or not the DNA profiles match.



Analyst Leslie Katzilierakis transfers a DNA sample into a tube to be placed onto the instrument for analysis

OSBI Exceeds in Energy Efficiency Program, Saving State Money

by Facilities Managers

A few years ago, Oklahoma lawmakers passed a bill mandating state agencies save 20% in energy costs by the year 2020. This program is known as the Oklahoma State Facilities Energy Conservation Program. As a result, statewide contract number 125 was created and issued to Engineered Systems & Energy Solutions, Inc (ES2). ES2 provides expertise to assist state agencies in conserving energy while receiving a 20% fee for each location that has realized energy savings. This fee may be waived if an exemption from the program has been properly filed and granted.

The OSBI has embraced the idea of saving energy, which equates to saving tax payer dollars. To help achieve the mandated goal of 20% savings by the year 2020, several OSBI facility managers attended numerous training sessions hosted by Oklahoma Office of Management Enterprise Services 20% X 2020 and EnergyCap. This training covered how to input utility expenditures and create reports to help monitor historical and current energy usage. Facility managers must be aware of past transactions, present conditions, and future achievable technologies/trends to implement and achieve the 20% x 2020 state-mandated program. As part of the EnergyCap, a searchable, historical database was created for OSBI's facilities.

During the process of inputting utility expenditures, numerous discrepancies were encoun-

tered in utility bills. From these discrepancies, the OSBI was able to receive refunds. For example, the Western Regional Office (WRO) received a refund for two months of electrical service and the Forensic Science Center (FSC) received \$16,063 for double-billing. Monitoring of past transactions also revealed some energy bills included taxes. The state does not pay taxes. That money was reimbursed.

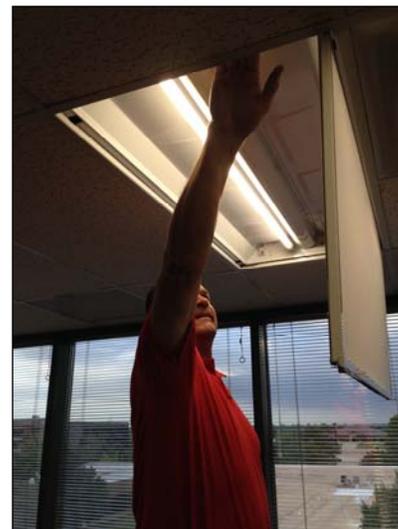
To date, OSBI has submitted nine exemptions to ES2 for specific projects and has received either a full exemption or a partial exemption on all nine because the facilities showed an energy savings. ES2 granted eight partial exemptions on projects related to heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC), and lighting. ES2 also granted the Bureau a complete exemption concerning the abandoned Central Regional Lab (CRL).

The HVAC projects encompassed the replacement of older, less efficient units located at the Northwest Regional Laboratory (NWRL). We replaced one four-ton unit and two five-ton units.

October 2014, OSBI converted Headquarters and NWRL from florescent lighting to LED lighting. Both projects are approximately 99% complete. The OSBI headquarters facility manager applied for rebates provided by Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E) and was awarded \$22,655. The annual estimated energy saving by OG&E is 342,473kWh at a cost saving of \$25,000.

In June, OSBI will begin a simi-

lar project of converting the FSC from florescent lighting to LED lighting. The approximate cost is projected to be \$27,000 and the City of Edmond will provide a rebate of \$20,908. The estimated annual energy savings cost is nearly \$24,000.



HQ Facilities & Supply Supervisor Keith Swenson installs new LED lighting

OSBI is researching several additional projects including modifying exterior lighting to LED lights, replacing exterior window seals, and upgrading HVAC systems to variable-speed fan systems with high-efficiency transfer coils. At the Forensic Science Center, OSBI is researching new technology on air circulation which could reduce energy usage by 50%.

OSBI facility managers also work to get employees engaged in this program by emailing energy saving tips, hoping energy-saving practices at work become a way of life.

Director Briefs Citizens Academy Members on Weleetka Girls' Case

by Jessica Brown/Public Information Director

OSBI hosted its biyearly Bureau Breakfast Briefing for OSBI Citizens' Academy members in late April. OSBI Director Stan Florence spoke to more than 20 members about the Weleetka girls' homicide. Taylor Paschal-Placker, 13, and her best friend Skyla Whitaker, 11, were gunned down only yards from Placker's rural Okfuskee County home June 8, 2008. OSBI agents ran hundreds of leads across the state. The case brought national attention to the small town of

Weleetka. Three years later, agents arrested Kevin Sweat after he killed his girlfriend Ashley Taylor. Her burned remains were found on Sweat's family property near where the two girls were gunned down. Sweat admitted to agents he killed the girls. During the hour-long breakfast meeting, Florence laid out the case from when Placker's grandfather found the two girls dead in a ditch to Sweat accepting a

plea offered by the district attorney. Sweat will spend his life behind bars.



Dir. Florence briefs Citizens' Academy Members

Oklahoma Task Force Marks Year's Successes, Protecting Children

by Charles Mackey/Special Agent in Charge

The Oklahoma Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force arrested 72 people in 2014 for technology-assisted sexual exploitation crimes against children. Oklahoma ICAC is a member of the Federal ICAC Task Force. The ICAC Task Force was created to help law enforcement enhance their investigative responses to offenders who use the Internet, online communication systems, or computer technology to sexually exploit children. The ICAC program is a national network of 61 coordinated task forces representing more

than 3,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies.

The Oklahoma ICAC Task Force is comprised of 87 affiliate agencies with more than 180 officers statewide. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation heads the task force. The OSBI has granted statewide ICAC investigative credentials to members of the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, Canadian County Sheriff's Office, Edmond Police Department, Enid Police Department, Shawnee Police Department, Still-

water Police Department, and Tulsa Police Department.

In 2014, the Oklahoma ICAC Task Force worked 675 cyber-tips, wrote 310 search warrants or court orders, and conducted more than 600 computer forensic exams. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NECMEC) operates the Cyber Tipline which receives leads and tips regarding suspected crimes of sexual exploitation committed against children. NECMEC can be contacted at 800-843-5678 or at www.missingkids.com.

DNA continued from p. 1

A feature that makes CODIS so powerful is when DNA profiles are entered into CODIS, they continue to be searched several times a week, indefinitely. Even if a CODIS hit is not immediately made, the sample is saved and searched over and over as new

samples are added. Many profiles have multiple matches associated with them showing serial patterns that might have been missed without the aid of a computer. The CODIS unit at the OSBI works diligently to provide the CODIS hit information to investigators so that they can do their part to apprehend suspects. By partnering together

and working swiftly, the OSBI lab and law enforcement are doing what we can to get criminals off the streets so that they cannot victimize additional people. This is how CODIS supports the OSBI's mission of keeping the citizens of Oklahoma safe and secure.

Upholding the Crime Victims' Rights

by Christy Penny/OSBI Victim Services Coordinator

As the month of April fades away, the memories of National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2015 remain. The stories of the men and women recognized for their work in advancing the rights of crime victims serve as reminders that great growth usually only comes after great pain. We are thankful to those victims that found the strength to rise out of their victimization to fight for justice for everyone. It is upon their backs that the victims' rights movement in Oklahoma was carried and why victims now have rights and protections similar to those of the accused (which had already been established long before those of victims).

It has been almost twenty years since Oklahoma adopted the

victims' rights amendment to the state constitution and, while there is much to be proud of, there is still so much yet to be accomplished. There are still well over a dozen states that have yet to adopt some form of victims' rights into their state constitutions, let alone establish victim service providers to advocate for victims' rights within the various levels of government, law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

The OSBI Victims' Support Program (VSP) is honored to serve and uphold the rights of those who have been victimized by violent crime. Through coordination and cooperation with other state and local agencies, the VSP seeks to enforce the constitutional rights of

victims. The VSP works to bring awareness of victims' rights through educational training for victims, their families, OSBI staff and the greater public. Part of this training is to be sure a victim or victim's family is educated on the criminal justice process and the services available to them during each phase of the investigation, criminal justice, and healing processes.

If you have questions, or would like more information on victims' rights, please contact the OSBI Victims' Support Program by calling, (405) 715-9579, or emailing, vic-tims.support@osbi.ok.gov.

OSBI Opens Office at State Capitol

by Jessica Brown/OSBI Public Information Director

OSBI has opened a new field office in an area where agents are spending more time opening investigations – the state capitol. One of the few crimes for which the Bureau has original jurisdiction is threats against public officials. In the past several years, more elected officials are reporting verbal and written threatening language directed toward them. In calendar year 2012, OSBI investigated three cases. A year later, agents opened four cases. In 2014, agents worked 10 cases involving threats to public officials. Prior to the beginning of this year's legislative session, OSBI

Director Stan Florence spoke with representatives from the Governor's office, the House of Representatives, and the Senate about the need for an OSBI agent to work from the state capitol during the legislative session. Speaker of the House Jeff Hickman's Office found space on the third floor of the capitol to house an agent. OSBI assigned veteran OSBI Special Agent Tommy Johnson to the new satellite office. From that capitol office, Special Agent Johnson can respond to legislators much more quickly and efficiently.



Special Agent Tommy Johnson works from new satellite office on 3rd floor of state capitol

