Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

THE SOURCE

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New Technology in Crime Lab Provides Better, Faster Results

By Andrea Swiech/OSBI Criminalistics Division Director

Like most other states, Oklahoma has seen a dramatic increase in the number of DUI cases, especially those involving prescription drug use by drivers. To ensure that our lab provides the most accurate results in the shortest time possible, we sought to obtain the newest technology on the market for analyzing blood samples in toxicology cases.

Through funding provided by the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO) in 2013, the OSBI purchased a new instrument to analyze toxicology cases. The liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometer (LCMSMS) was purchased for ~$350,000. It was incorporated into casework during 2014 and has proven to be a tremendous asset to the Toxicology Unit. The LCMSMS instrument uses smaller volumes of samples, provides results in much less time than previous methods, and is much more sensitive detecting substances that are sometimes missed by the typical instrument used in toxicology, the gas chromatograph/ mass spectrometer (GCMS).

Analysts using the GCMS must perform 17 individual steps and use 2 milliliters of a blood sample to prepare the sample for analysis. It takes approximately 90 minutes to extract 10 samples and 30 minutes per sample to run on the GCMS. A full run takes more than five hours on the GCMS.

Using the LCMSMS, analysts perform 11 individual steps and need only 0.25 milliliters of a blood sample. It takes approximately 45 minutes to extract 10 samples and only 6 minutes per sample to run it on the LC. A full run takes one hour using the LC.

The LCMSMS is much more sensitive than the GCMS. The Toxicology Unit tested this by reanalyzing samples on the LCMSMS that had initially been analyzed on the GCMS. Additional substances were identified in three of the four cases reanalyzed.

OSBI Donates Equipment to Rural Law Enforcement

By Jessica Brown/Public Information Officer

Rural sheriff's departments and police agencies across the state are benefiting from a new effort by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation to help outfit local law enforcement with surplused state equipment. Recently, OSBI Director Stan Florence presented the Okfuskee County Sheriff's Office and the Okemah Police Department with numerous items necessary to keep officers safe. Okfuskee County received 13 used Tactical Body Armor vests, three used 12-gauge police shotguns, and two used pickup trucks. OSBI gave the Okemah Police Department nine used Tactical Body Armor vests. These are items small departments sometimes cannot afford to provide their officers.

In the past ten months, OSBI has also given 15 body armor vests to the Latimer County Sheriff's Department, a 2007 Chevrolet Impala to the Sawyer Police Department, a 2009 Chevrolet Trailblazer to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, a 2008 Chevrolet Extended-Cab pickup truck to the Sequoyah County Sheriff's Department, a 2009 Jeep Grand Cherokee to the District 23 District Attorney's Task Force, a 2009 Chevrolet Trailblazer to the District 8 District Attorney's Task Force, a 2009 Chevrolet Trailblazer to the Hollis Police Department, and a 2007 Chevrolet Impala to the McCloud Police Department.

All vehicles donated to the law enforcement organizations had more than 100,000 miles.

OSBI Director Stan Florence (right) presents Okfuskee Co. Sheriff Darrell Summers and Okemah Police Chief Ed Smith with surplused equipment. State Senator Roger Thompson and Representative Steve Kouplen helped receive shotguns for their local agencies.

Soon, the OSBI will donate two more law enforcement vehicles to departments.

New Program Updates Criminal Records Aids Employers, Law Enforcement, Gun Carry Applicants

by Anne Simons/Information Services Division

OSBI initiated a new program last fall to help ensure criminal history records are updated, greatly benefiting job applicants, the criminal justice community, and SDA licensing applicants. This project adds dispositions to incomplete criminal history records. Dispositions are the final outcome of a charge filed in court. Many times charges are dismissed or a person is found not guilty. If the disposition is missing, employers have to research the case to make sure the person was not convicted. Some employers may not put forth the effort to conduct this research and simply dismiss the applicant.

The criminal justice community will benefit from this project by being provided more complete records upon which decisions are made. Police officers making decisions in the field and district attorneys making charging decisions will have a more complete resource.

The approval of Self Defense Act licenses can be delayed because dispositions are missing from the criminal history record. Missing dispositions require staff to research charges before issuing a license. More complete records will help make that process faster. The approval decision for qualified applicants will be made much quicker on some applications as a result of this work.

Although still in its early stages, more than 9,000 missing dispositions have already been added to

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criminal history records as a result of this project. This project is funded through a National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) grant, administered through the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council, whose goal is to improve the nation's safety and security by enhancing the quality, completeness, and accessibility of criminal history record information. The project goal is to research court records and add dispositions to criminal history records or Report of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP) sheets that are missing the final outcome.

Housed in the Crime Data Collection and Analysis Unit of the Information Services Division, the employees working on this project are dedicated to improving the completeness and accuracy of criminal history records.

OSBI Presents Information on DNA Database at House Interim Study

by Andrea Swiech/OSBI Criminalistics Division Director

October 2014, the OSBI was asked to present information to legislators during an interim study organized by Representative Lee Denney (R-Cushing). The focus of the interim study was to inform lawmakers about the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which is more commonly known as the DNA database. For the past few years, Representative Denney has sought to expand the database by introducing legislation to require individuals who are arrested for certain crimes in Oklahoma to have their DNA entered into the database. The expansion would protect our citizens by solving crimes faster and preventing some crimes from occurring.

At the study, OSBI Criminalistics Division Director Andrea Swiech explained the purpose of CODIS is to detect or exclude individuals who are subjects of investigations of crimes in which biological evidence has been recovered. She shared the requirements that labs must meet in order to participate in CODIS. These requirements ensure that the labs performing the DNA analysis follow strict guidelines when collecting, analyzing, reviewing, and storing the DNA. She described the numerous safeguards in place to protect the DNA information and the penalties imposed if someone should disclose the information without proper authorization.

Swiech explains to House members how the DNA database works

During her presentation, Swiech expressed concern over the current law which requires individuals convicted of eighteen specific misdemeanors to have their DNA entered in to CODIS. She explained that there is confusion within the criminal justice community about who exactly should be collecting these samples. Swiech stated that the law was expanded in May 2009 to allow for collection upon the conviction of an individual for any of the 18 misdemeanor crimes. Since that date, Oklahoma has had more than 29,500 individuals convicted for those crimes. However, only 495 DNA samples had been collected and submitted to the OSBI for entry into CODIS from those individuals.

Those 18 misdemeanor crimes include assault and battery, domestic violence, threatening an act of violence, negligent homicide, and stalking.

Award Ceremony Honors OSBI Employees at Annual Banquet

by Jessica Brown/OSBI Public Information Officer

December 2, 2014, OSBI employees from across the state gathered at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum to celebrate the hard work preformed during the year. Special recognition went to more than a dozen teams and numerous individuals. Newschannel 4's Ali Myer hosted the first half of the event. After lunch, Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Tom Colbert presented awards.

Agent of the year was presented to Lynda Stevens for her relentless work on a child sexual assault case involving a suspect who worked for law enforcement. For years, the suspect and his wife were foster parents for numerous children. Several of the children complained to the Department of Human Services they were being sexually and physical abused by their foster father. That man worked for a small police department as a police dispatcher. Because of his position working with law enforcement, the DHS case worker did not believe the children. Agent Stevens was not deterred by the suspect's profession and spent months tracking down children who had been placed inside the man's home. Ultimately, the child serial rapist pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Mistie Burris was OSBI's 2014 Criminalist of the Year for her professionalism, ingenuity, and strong work ethic. In particular, Burris focused work on synthetic cannabinoid compounds led to the passage of legislation to control the quickly changing synthetics as a class of compounds. The scheduling of a group of compounds based on chemical structure is breaking new ground for Oklahoma. To make it easier to identify the structure of these compounds and how they relate to new law, Burris drafted the Forensic Chemistry Protocol to guide controlled substance analysts. She also created structural data sheets for each synthetic compound for easy reference.

The award for 2014 Non-Commissioned Employee of the Year was presented to Felicia Jackson. She supervised the project creating the Handgun Licensing Online Portal whereby applicants can apply for a license via the internet. This mammoth project required extensive coordination between government agencies, several OSBI units, and the state's computer gurus. Jackson worked diligently to ensure the application was user friendly and made the processing of the application more efficient for the SDA Unit. In January, the online application opened for business and is currently accounting for 30% of all applications. During the year, Jackson also coordinated two other major improvements to the processing of licenses.

Director Stan Florence (left) and Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Colbert (right) present Mistie Burris with Criminalist of the Year award.

The latent evidence unit was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for the teamwork performed when the unit implemented a Cold Case Project centered around the implementation of the FBI's Next Generation Identification automated print system. This system is three times more accurate than the previous one and has the capability to search latent palm prints from crime scenes. Among the cases solved, a 1997 case involving the murder of a 14-year-old girl in Wisconsin.

Bureau Briefings Target Citizens Academy Members

by *Jessica Brown/Public Information Officer*

Director Stan Florence updates Citizens Academy members on bureau issues.

As part of an on-going effort by OSBI to educate citizens about how OSBI serves their community, the Bureau invited back to headquarters citizens from across the state who have participated in the OSBI Citizens Academies. This breakfast meeting attracted nearly 30 people interested in learning how OSBI has evolved since they last attended the academy.

OSBI Director Stan Florence spoke to the group about the top five crime issues in Oklahoma. Those issues, as identified by OSBI's Statistical Analysis Unit, consist of credit fraud, internet crimes against children, cyber crime, gang-related homicides, and domestic violence and sexual assault. Florence went on to describe OSBI's administrative issues which include information and intelligence sharing, recruitment and retirement, and funding. The group also learned how OSBI is solving cold cases with a DNA grant that allows criminalists to test or retest evidence from old cases. In many of these older cases, technology did not exist to produce forensic leads. New technology also at the hands of OSBI fingerprint analysts is rejuvenating cold cases. An upgrade in the automated fingerprint identification system is helping to match prints due to its enhanced ability. So far, more than a dozen cold cases have new leads.