



Crime Lab News

Volume IV, Issue I

Spring 2020

Inside this issue

ASCL Intern Program	2
Case Acceptance Update	3
Section Focus — Physical Evidence	3
AR Act 920	4
Staffing Updates	4
Recent Charitable Events	5
Important Tidbits	5
Performance Survey	6

A Message from our Director

The Crime Laboratory, like the rest of the nation, has taken necessary steps to keep our employees safe while remaining operational in order to meet the critical needs of the criminal justice system and the citizens of Arkansas.



Our dedicated staff are working in shifts to promote social distancing and are taking all necessary precautions to minimize our exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

- We will be monitoring all individuals' temperatures entering the laboratory, including both crime lab personnel and law enforcement officers.
- We are cleaning and disinfecting targeted areas of the lab daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

These are difficult times for all of us, both at home and at work, but we will continue to serve the criminal justice system and the citizens of Arkansas.

Current Turn Around Times

Drug Chemistry

- Little Rock 4.5 months
- Hope 3.5 months
- Lowell 5 months

Toxicology

- DUI/DWI (LR) 30 days
- DUI/DWI (Lowell) 30 days
- Coroner (LR) 30 days
- Coroner (Lowell) 30 days
- Medical Examiner 30 days

Latent Prints

- Comparisons (Homicide) 30 days
- Comparisons (Other) 35 days

Firearms

- Comparisons (Homicide) 7 months
- Comparisons (Other) 35 months
- NIBIN 16 days

Digital Evidence

- Computers 60 days
- Mobile Devices 40 days

Trace Evidence

- Ignitable Liquids 30 days
- Primer GSR 30 days

Serology

- Homicide 30 days
- Sexual Assault 30 days
- Property/Other 14 Months

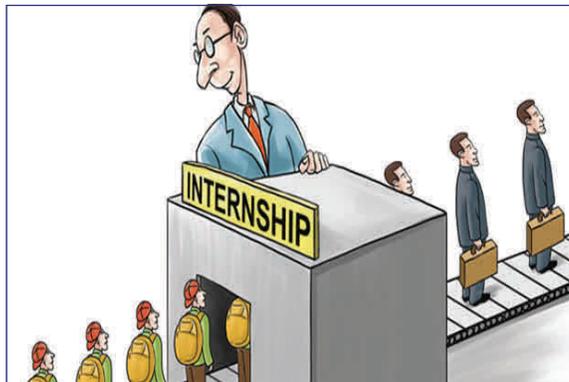
DNA

- Homicide 9 months
- Sexual Assault Kits 60 days
- Property/Other 44 months



ASCL Intern Program — Summer 2020

Over the last 10 years, the ASCL has had a Summer Undergraduate Internship Program for rising undergraduate students in Chemistry, Biology and Forensic Science interested in a career in Forensic Science. This is a 'win/win' program for both the student and the crime lab. It is a great recruiting tool and allows the students to work on research projects that aid improvement in forensic science. In fact, the ASCL has hired several students from the program once they have completed their degree.



This is a 6-8 week program that allows undergraduate students with a strong scientific education to gain hands-on experience. Those selected for the program get a 'real world' glance at the different career paths available in forensic science. During the program, interns focus on a research project and shadow analysts in their assigned discipline. This year, those disciplines are Drug Chemistry, DNA, and Latent Prints/Firearms. At the end of the program, each intern will present the result of their assigned project(s) to the ASCL staff. Below are comments from interns that have participated in the program:

"This internship afforded me the opportunity to work with instrumentation I would not normally have access to, as well as learn from some of the best," - Emily Harness, Summer 2019 Intern

"The ASCL internship was an invaluable and unique experience to me, and I highly recommend those pursuing a career in law enforcement/forensics to spend a Summer in Little Rock." - Stephen Wooten, Summer 2019 Intern

"Not only did it confirm my long-term goals, but the internship provided me with strong talking points for my graduate school applications and allowed me to build strong working relationships with individuals who went on to write my letters of recommendation." - Aubrey Brink, Summer 2019 Intern

"Working with people who have helped me reach my goals, learning details about testing and instruments I wouldn't have been able to in my classes, experiencing what opportunities are available to scientists outside of medicine and research, and gaining a solid, real understanding of the field, made the ASCL summer internship an incredible experience for me." - Keeley Johnson, ASCL Forensic Toxicologist, Summer 2017 Intern

Retirement Announcement



We would like to thank Bobby Humphries for his many years of service with the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory. His knowledge in Latent Prints, Footwear and Tire Impressions, Operation Shutdown, and Mass Fatality planning will be greatly missed. He plans to stay busy in retirement by teaching Concealed Handgun classes. Congratulations!

Case Acceptance Update

Footwear

Due to loss of staff, the ASCL has discontinued all Footwear services.

Footwear testing resources:

Timberline Forensics, LLC
janlemay@timberlineforensics.com
phone — 970-397-2469

or

For FBI requests, submit a digital image along with an e-mail request for search on agency letterhead to shoeprintsearch@ic.fbi.gov.

Please contact Kermit Channell (at 501-227-5952 or kermit.channell@crimelab.arkansas.gov) if you have questions or concerns.



Section Focus — Physical Evidence

The Physical Evidence Section handles a large variety of evidence items within a broad range of case types. These include homicides, sexual assaults, burglaries, property crimes, and arson cases. The Physical Evidence Section consists of two Units: Serology and Trace Evidence.

The Serology Unit examines physical evidence items for the present of blood, semen, and/or transfer DNA (sometimes called touch DNA). Samples are collected to forward to the DNA Section of the laboratory. Additionally, the Serology Unit collects tape lifts, as needed, to preserve hair and fiber evidence for possible further testing.

The Trace Evidence Unit examines physical evidence items for the presence of ignitable liquids (Arson/Fire Debris submissions) and primer gunshot residue (GSR kits and clothing samples from suspects). This Unit also microscopically examines hairs to determine their the suitability for DNA analysis.

The Physical Evidence Section has recently seen many changes. In the late summer of 2019, the Serology Unit moved into a newly-renovated area at the Crime Lab. This renovation included new lab space as well as an area dedicated for report writing. The section has experienced a change in leadership. Lisa Channell, the Section Chief of the Physical Evidence section retired in December of 2019 after 37 years of service. She will be missed! Mandi Wertenberger was recently promoted as the new section supervisor and is already settling in well in her new role! For questions relating to Physical Evidence testing or submissions, please call her at 501-683-6183.

State of Arkansas Act 920

This Act concerns the investigation into a missing or unidentified person and the use of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Key points in this legislation include:

- * All Arkansas law enforcement officers **shall** complete training related to the investigation of unidentified and missing persons.
 - * Training is made available by the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training (ALETA)
- * The following data, if available, shall be entered into NamUs:
 - * Copies of fingerprints on standardized fingerprint cards, 8"× 8", or equivalent digital image including partial prints of any fingers
 - * Forensic dental report
 - * Detailed personal description
 - * Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) information
 - * Radiology imaging and medical data
 - * All other identifying data, including date and place of death
- * **Within thirty days** of receiving a missing or unidentified person report, a law enforcement agency shall initiate the procedure detailed in this Act, .

Fingerprints are a reliable method of personal identification. Immediately after being submitted, fingerprints are available for comparison through an internal NamUs AFIS database as well as the FBI's Next Generation Identification (NGI) database. It is **imperative** that any fingerprint record or digital image is scanned into NamUs at **≥500 dpi**. Increased image resolution results in a higher quality ("crisper") image. The quality of a fingerprint image is important because these databases are massive collections of fingerprints, and low clarity decreases the likelihood of a match.

New Hires & Role Changes

Please help us welcome two new additions to the ASCL family!

- ◇ Angela Merrell, Death Investigator
- ◇ Barbara Dimon, Death Investigator



Congratulations **Mandi Wertenberger** on being promoted to Physical Evidence Section Chief! Mandi has nearly 14 years of experience with the ASCL as a Forensic Serologist. Her vast knowledge and expertise will serve her well in this supervisory role. She is a great addition to our management team and will do an awesome job leading the Physical Evidence Section!

Giving Back — Children's Protection Center

Employees at the ASCL are dedicated to providing services for our community, not just by seeking justice for victims of crime, but also by giving back to the less fortunate. Our spring charity is the Children's Protection Center in Little Rock, and we take pride in announcing that we have raised \$481.98 so far in 2020 for this great organization.



2020 charitable events (so far) include:

- ◆ Jan 30 — Nugg-A-Thon
- ◆ Feb 14 — Valentine's Goodies
- ◆ Feb 14 — Kiss A Pig
- ◆ March 13 — Pi (π) Day

We look forward to organizing more events to benefit the CPS!



“The mission of Children's Protection Center is to provide a child-friendly facility where professionals work together to protect and treat child abuse victims and their families, to prevent child abuse in all its forms, and to hold offenders accountable.”

<https://www.childrensprotectioncenter.org/>

Important Tidbits



- Coming Soon — ASCL section specific training presentations!! Once complete, these presentations will be remotely accessible through the ACADIS portal. This will allow law enforcement access to essential information at their convenience.
- Make sure that you are signed up and using all of the enhanced features that our LASSO software provides. Remember to check the analyst's calendar, if possible, before submitting subpoenas, to be sure of availability.
 - *For questions regarding LASSO, please contact Isabel Higgins-Threats by phone: (501) 683-6149 or by e-mail: isabel.threats@crimelab.arkansas.gov*
- Renovation work will begin April 6 for our DNA section which will increase their reporting workstation space. This project is expected to take 90-120 days.

ARKANSAS STATE CRIME LABORATORY

3 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Phone: (501) 227-5747
Fax: (501) 227-0713

Mission



To provide quality forensic services to the criminal justice community and the State of Arkansas in a timeframe amenable to our customers.

Vision



Support public safety by providing analytical results within thirty days of submission.



Clear Communication: Communicate often, promptly, professionally and in person when appropriate

Quality: Excellence, getting it right the first time, consistent performance, continuous improvement, taking pride in one's work

Professional Development: Growing and engaging employees through training, mentoring, and providing leadership opportunities

Safety: Providing a safe work environment and educating employees on safety practices

Accountability: Holding oneself and others responsible for productive and ethical behavior.

Teamwork: Having a common vision, ensuring cohesiveness, assisting one another, supporting other sections, putting others interests first and making decisions based on what is best for the laboratory

ASCL Performance Survey

Feedback from our customers is important in order for us to keep up with your expectations. Continued feedback is necessary to remain aligned to goals, make important decisions, develop strategies, and improve relationships. Please take a moment to check out our **new** survey at the link below:

<https://forms.gle/ps49najmPKUeZ1aA>

A \$25 Amazon gift card will be given out quarterly to one lucky participant, so don't miss out!!

