

OCTOBER 2009 DNA RESOURCE REPORT

NEWS ARTICLES

1. “DA’s office won’t pay for crime lab tests.” Dallas Morning News, September 7, 2009
In Texas, the Dallas County has announced that it will no longer pick up the tab for crime lab testing requested by local police departments. For years, the office paid for tests once its prosecutors took cases filed by law enforcement agencies. County commissioners now say a huge budget shortfall that once exceeded \$60 million has forced their hand. The change exemplifies the cost reduction efforts governments employ as they struggle with bad economic times. Dallas County commissioners have already demanded that departments slash their budgets by 10 percent.
2. “DNA links cold case to inmate.” Journal Gazette, August 30, 2009
In Indiana, police say that they have solved a 30-year-old murder case by extracting DNA from a cigarette found at the crime scene. DNA was not available when a 49-year-old Lafayette man was stabbed at a hotel in 1980. The Tippecanoe County Sheriff’s Department says DNA recently extracted from the cigarette butt found in the hotel room murder scene matches that of the 50-year-old Texas prison inmate. The suspect is currently serving time in prison for battery on an elderly person, a case that is completely unrelated to the murder.
3. “Forensic Officials hope to reduce DNA backlog.” WTVM.com, August 27, 2009.
In Alabama, almost a million dollars in federal funds will be spent to aid the state’s DNA backlog, and help bring closure to cases for thousands of crime victims that are awaiting DNA test results in Alabama. The Department of Forensic science has been able to decrease the backlog on their own, only to watch the case load increase, and the additional funds will help. Alabama’s Forensic Department ranks first in the nation for solving the most cases using DNA results. State officials met to discuss the cuts that need to be made for next years budget, and said they are working to keep that from hindering DNA testing progress.
4. “DPS: Budget Cuts cause DNA backlog.” KPHO.com, August 20, 2009.
In Arizona, budget cuts have left more than 8,000 samples un-entered into a state DNA database, which makes it more difficult to identify and arrest some suspects, crime lab officials said. In one case, the Public Safety Crime Lab Superintendent said that a suspect in the sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl would have been picked up months earlier if it were not for the backlog. The 20-year-old man was arrested for burglary in November 2008, but his sample was not entered into the state’s DNA database until May 2009. The crime lab saw its budget decrease by nearly 70% from the last fiscal year. The Superintendent said that federal stimulus money should help speed up the process, but until then, victims will just have to wait for justice.
5. “Colorado DNA test backlog could get bigger.” Coloradoan, September 3, 2009.
In Colorado, despite new laws requiring more DNA tests in Colorado, the Governor said that cutting the forensic testing department’s budget is necessary to help the state cope with the budget shortfall this year. One of the cuts will be a DNA technician from the state-testing lab, even though the state has a backlog of 2,700 samples from homicides, sex assaults, and other crimes. The problem will only get worse with laws requiring DNA testing for all felony

arrests, because the crime lab will be flooded with further testing requirements. The senate sponsor of “Katie’s Law” said the cut is “ironic”, but that he understands the financial crisis is forcing an otherwise supportive governor’s hand.

6. “DNA test backlogs could delay trials.” Indianapolis Star, August 23, 2009.

In Indiana, crime labs are grappling with a flood of evidence requests that could delay trials in Marion County and across Indiana. Leaders at the state’s two government-run crime labs say they have a handle on the problem and are hiring new analysts, investing in automation and leaning on private labs to take outsourced cases. Despite nearly \$500 million in federal grants since 2004 to help clear backlogs nationwide, turnaround in Indiana has slowed to a typical three to six month for biological evidence, short of the lab’s six-week turnaround target. Some cases, including homicide cold cases, get lower priority. The prosecutor’s office says that communication has kept them from missing any convictions, but they have to regularly negotiate case priority with the state labs.

7. “LA Sheriff Commits \$3 Million for Rape DNA Testing.” Reuters, September 2, 2009.

In California, the Sheriff of Las Angeles County has agreed to direct over \$3 million in his FY 2010 budget to testing physical evidence in rape cases for DNA matches. The funding commitment is an essential step for the county to eliminate its backlog, currently estimated at 4,071 cases, in testing the collections of evidence. In June the Sheriff’s Department announced that it had suspended rape kit testing due to lack of funds, and that, of the 200 kits that had been tested prior to June 2009, only six profiles were entered into the database for possible criminal and crime scene matches. Human Rights Watch groups has urged the Sheriff’s department to develop a detailed plan to continue testing kits, after a September report that testing 283 kits yielded the department 8 arrests on matched evidence.

8. “State police crime lab cuts DNA testing time.” The Times, August 24, 2009.

In New Jersey, while some state are struggling with a DNA backlog, the New Jersey State Police Office of Forensic Science has reduced their backlog to a mere 225 cases. The average turn-around time for a DNA test is 45 days, and the Attorney General’s office defines a backlog as any cases more that 30 days old. A spokeswoman for the Mercer County prosecutor said that her office has no problem with how long it takes the state to process DNA samples, even though defense attorneys are complaining that even 45 days is too long to be proven innocent. The lab is doing a “remarkable” job according to the attorney general’s office, and with about 700 cases pending on average, the \$308,000 in federal grant money has helped by paying overtime to expedite DNA processing.

9. “OSBI Backlog Blamed in Rape Case.” KOCO.com, August 19, 2009.

In Oklahoma, a serious backlog at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations Crime Lab is being blamed for keeping an accused rapist on the street. Investigators said data linked a suspect to a teen’s attack eight months after he gave the sample. The same suspect is being accused of attacking an Enid woman the day before his most recent arrest. The woman is accusing the man of raping her in her home on July 7th. The accused man’s case started when a November court order compelled him to submit a sample in the rape of a 15-year-old girl. The sample was not tested until June 29th, and he was arrested on July 8th, a day late to save the second rape victim.

10. "DNA solves 2008 burglary cases." Press Republican, September 5, 2009.
In New York, police say that DNA on a discarded cigarette butt have linked a Plattsburgh man to at least two previously unsolved burglaries from 2008. The first burglary happened on Dormitory Drive at an empty dorm building owned by Clinton Community College, where all the copper tubing was stripped from the building. About two weeks later, when someone ransacked a rented storage space and stole the copper tubing, police suspected the same perpetrator was to blame. Shortly after the break-ins, a 28-year-old man was caught outside of a building with "burglar tools" and DNA linked him to physical evidence in the previous cases, despite his denials to any involvement in the previous crimes.
11. "DNA backlog reduced at PBSO crime lab." Palm Beach County, September 3, 2009.
In Florida, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office has slashed a backlog of DNA samples waiting to be tested. The caseload went from 1,770 in August 2008 to 29 cases this month. The dramatic reduction is the result of cutting down on swab samples, hiring four new analysts, and federal grants that enabled outsourcing. A decent number of those cases were eliminated because detectives reviewed their cases, and eliminated any samples from cases that were resolved in court. The manager of the Forensic Biology Unit in the Sheriff's Office crime lab thanked Law Enforcement agencies on the Planning Council, and said that they expect to eliminate the remaining cases very soon.
12. "Greenville County working to open its own DNA lab." Associated Press, August 24, 2009.
In South Carolina, the backlog of DNA analysis in northwestern areas of the state could soon be eased, thanks to a lab opening in Greenville. The State Law Enforcement Division spokeswoman says most law enforcement agencies in the state depend on the lab's 14 DNA analysts and five evidence technicians to review samples. They deal with dozens of cases a month and the work has been piling up under the pressure of the ongoing state budget crunch. Officials hope the new lab will accelerate the processing of DNA results to help prosecutors and defense attorneys resolve cases more rapidly.
13. "DNA leads to burglary suspect." South Burlington Vermont, September 2, 2009.
In Vermont, DNA evidence has been used to solve murder cases, and now South Burlington police have used it to solve a burglary. Investigators say a thief who swiped a large amount of cash from a home last summer left some DNA behind. The evidence was run the FBI CODIS DNA database and police say it matched a profile. The man is currently in prison in Florida for a burglary conviction there, and Vermont police have issued a warrant requiring his appearance upon completion of his sentence in Florida.
14. "DNA key to arrest of rape and robbery suspect." Nashville City Paper
In Tennessee, investigators using genetic evidence said that they had identified the person charged with rape and robbery against a couple performing works for Habitat for Humanity home in July 2008. The 20-year-old, a convicted home burglar from earlier this year is now jailed on one count of aggravated rape and two counts of aggravated robbery. Following the incident, a sex crimes detective spotted evidence on the female victim's clothing that he believed could potentially yield a DNA profile. The crime lab entered the sample into

CODIS, and with help from the computerized matching system, they found the 20-year-old's profile from his unrelated criminal case.

15. "DNA tests leads to arrest of woman for murder 32 year ago." Mail Online, August 28, 2009. In Germany, a former member of the Red Army Faction terror gang that attempted to overthrow the West German government has been arrested for a murder 32 year ago. The government's chief federal prosecutor was gunned down on April 7, 1977, and DNA on letters claiming responsibility for the attacks were recently genetically matched to a woman that officers have in custody. Prosecutors are still questioning who fired the deadly shot, and it is unclear whether they are holding her for conspiracy or perpetration of the actual crime.
16. "Trial opens for accused ringleader in 2007 invasion, rape." LoHud.com, September 8, 2009. In New York, prosecutors believe that they finally have the ringleader of a violent home invasion two years ago in Yonkers, raping a woman in front of her fiancé while the couple's 5-year-old daughter was in the other room. The 31-year-old felon from the Bronx will be on trial as the result of DNA profiles on a baseball cap and rape kit in the sexual assault. The man is also awaiting trial in the Bronx for murder, kidnapping, burglary and weapon charges for his alleged role in a 2007 fatal shooting there. He served six years in state prison on a conviction in the Bronx for assault, weapons, and reckless endangerment.
17. "DNA to be obtained by force if necessary." SMH.com, September 3, 2009. In Australia, the state government of New South Wales has moved to strengthen legislation so that force can be used to obtain the DNA of those listed on the child protection register that refuse to provide it voluntarily. It follows pressure from the police, who said some offenders on the register have refused to co-operate since the Government's move last year requiring them to provide their DNA. Under the proposed legislation, police will be able to detain people on the register who refuse to co-operate, and if they do not present themselves at a police station, they will be able to issue a warrant for their arrest.
18. "Dayton man charged in 2004 Brooklyn sexual assault." Press & News, September 2, 2009. In Minnesota, DNA evidence has led to an arrest in sexual assault cases in Brooklyn Center and Minneapolis. The 33-year-old was charged with several felonies, including two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and two counts of kidnapping. The Dayton suspect is accused of sexually assaulting a woman in 2004 in Brooklyn Center and another woman in 2006 in Minneapolis. Descriptions of the perpetrator led to one man in both cases, and police detectives learned that the suspect had been recently convicted of a felony, which means they would be able to find his DNA on the database. The Sheriff's office said that his profile matched evidence in both cold case rapes.
19. "Bel Air rapist sentenced to 100 years in prison." Baltimore Sun, September 2, 2009. In California, a rapist whose sweat led to his arrest was sentenced Tuesday to 100 years in prison. The perpetrator was arrested more than two years after the attack, which occurred in Bel Air in April 2006. Authorities say the man broke into a woman's home in the middle of the night, cut her phone lines and raped her in her bed. State police collected DNA swabs from more than 20 people but failed to develop a suspect. A tip from the victim last summer led police to interview the man now convicted. After the interview, police swabbed the chair

where he'd been sitting, and DNA from his sweat was found to match blood from the crime scene.

20. "DNA leads to arrest in 2006 rape case." Daily Comet, September 4, 2009.

In Louisiana, a Thibodaux man was arrested this week after DNA evidence implicated him in the 2006 rape of a hitchhiker. The woman was walking on a road when a man offered her a ride, but instead, took her to a wooded area and raped her. The victim ran to a nearby house for help, and DNA evidence was recovered and sent to the crime lab for processing. The results were successfully matched to a man's DNA, which was on file in a computerized database of sex offenders. The man had a criminal history unrelated to the crime, and is a registered sex offender according to police records.

21. "Lab's rules for DNA frustrate police." Wichita Eagle, September 6, 2009.

In Kansas, a Wichita police official says the regional forensic laboratory's restrictions on DNA testing will hamper efforts to combat street gangs. The Director of the Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science center contends that the priority-based system is important to solving the most important crimes first. The crime lab processes violent crime samples faster than other samples to insure that victims don't have to wait 18-months for a rape kit test to return. However, with the growing national interest in forensic DNA and the enormous new number of submitted samples, that means some testing gets pushed to the bottom of the file.

22. "DNA law misses 50,000 felons released in Illinois." Chicago Tribune, September 1, 2009.

In Illinois, an estimated 50,000 felons have been released from Illinois prisons or county probation without submitting DNA samples as required by law, leaving a gaping hole in the 7-year-old program designed to link known criminals to unsolved crimes. The Illinois Department of Corrections released nearly 10,000 felons without gathering their DNA since the law was enacted. The Attorney General's office estimates that county probation departments did not secure samples from 40,000 additional felons, mostly in Cook County, due to delays in implementing the law. The DNA samples are of major concern to law-enforcement officials, lawmakers, and victims advocates who say that there are unsolved cases that might have been closed with evidence connecting felons to more than one crime.

23. "DNA evidence OK in Grinnage gun case." Pottstown Mercury, September 1, 2009.

In Pennsylvania, a federal judge has ruled there was sufficient evidence included in a warrant to obtain DNA samples from a Pottstown area convicted drug dealer who authorities linked to a gun found in the Stow home he shared with his murdered girlfriend. Robbers who believed that they could rip off this well-known drug dealer burst into his home, and fatally shot his girlfriend. Although the 30-year-old is not being held in connection with the murder of his girlfriend, police found drug paraphernalia and a loaded gun in his home. The gun violates the conditions of his probation, and authorities seek to establish a link between him and his hidden gun.

24. "Law & Order fan." Yahoo News, August 27, 2009.

In New York, a woman that is an avid fan of "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" recently helped police close a crime using techniques she saw on her favorite show. A robber walked

into the production company where the woman works, and stole an employee's purse, iPod, and a wallet. Before leaving, he drank water and blew his nose. The woman saved the cup and tissue. Investigators used DNA samples from the items to track down and arrest a suspect. On Thursday, an actress from the show called her to express her "awe."

25. "DNA evidence from 2006 rape leads to arrest." Anchorage Daily News, September 2, 2009. In Alaska, a cold-case attempted rape has been solved through DNA evidence. A 25-year-old man has been charged with first-degree attempted sexual assault, kidnapping and third-degree sexual assault. Police say his DNA matched that of a sample collected at the scene of the crime three years ago. The 25-year-old victim was carjacked, but managed to break free of the man when he attempted to rape her and she ran back to her work for help. Police collected evidence that was later matched to the perpetrator's profile on the CODIS system. The suspect had been entered onto the database in unrelated sexual abuse and indecent exposure charges.
26. "Man charged with Arson at Alamogordo Church." ABQNews.com, September 3, 2009. In Texas, police say suspect's DNA matched DNA evidence found at church crime scene. The Alamogordo Department of Public Safety spokesman says a man accused of setting fire to an Alamogordo church last month has been charged with arson. The 46-year-old suspect was charged with commercial burglary, and criminal damage; and DNA collected from the suspect matched DNA evidence found on items collected at the church crimes scene. The man had been jailed on unrelated charges in Huntsville, Texas, and will be extradited to Alamogordo.
27. "DNA helps make arrest after 19 months." WAFF48News, September 8, 2009. In Alabama, DNA evidence helps Lawrence County deputies make an arrest in a nearly 19-month-old burglary and theft case. Investigators linked the suspect to the theft after retrieving blood from a broken window where the burglar broke into the home. A DNA profile run through the Combined DNA Index System for Alabama came back with a profile matched to that of the suspect. Police questioned the man, and charged him with burglary in the third degree in connection with the crime at a home on County Road 87.
28. "Police arrest man wanted in 2007 WWU-area rape." Bellingham Herald, September 5, 2009. In Washington, a man who allegedly broke into a house near Western Washington University and raped a young woman in 2007 was apprehended on Thursday, Sept. 3, after tribal police found him hiding under a bed on the Tulalip reservation. The man in custody is a suspect in the April 27, 2007, rape of a woman in her 20s in an East Maple Street home. Police have been seeking him since July 2007 after they matched DNA from the crime to his DNA in a database, according to Bellingham police. He's also a suspect in a burglary in the area that same night.
29. "Senator Roberts announces \$385,000." Congressional Documents, September 24, 2009. In Washington, D.C., a US Senator from Kansas announced a \$385,000 grant to Johnson County for law enforcement under the Forensic DNA Backlog reduction program. The funds will be used to reduce forensic DNA sample turnaround time, increase the output of public DNA laboratories, and reduce DNA forensic casework backlogs. These improvements are

critical to prevent future DNA backlogs and to help the criminal justice system use the full potential of DNA technology. The grant was awarded by the National Institute of Justice.

30. "Sen. Johnson announces \$100,000." US Federal News, September 24, 2009.

In Washington, D.C., the office of South Dakota's Senator announced that the State Attorney's General's office will receive \$100,000 from the National Institute of Justice to expand DNA forensic technologies and decrease casework backlog. "DNA testing is an important component of the criminal justice system," the Senator said. "By expanding the capacity of the state's forensic laboratories, South Dakota will be able to conduct faster and more thorough analyses."