



# Crime Lab News

Volume III Issue II

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## A Message from our Director



As of July 1st, 2019 the state of Arkansas went through a transformation of state government. With this transformation, 42 cabinet Directors and agencies were consolidated to 15. As you all know, the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory became a part of the Department of Public Safety, led by Cabinet Secretary, Jami Cook.

As a Division Director under the Department of Public Safety, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Already, several members of our staff are playing key roles in the organization of task forces that will help to streamline all of our Department of Safety Divisions. As we move forward, our mission remains the same, to provide the highest quality scientific services to the criminal justice community and the State of Arkansas.

If you have any questions about the transformation process and how it might affect our agency, please feel free to contact me.  
[kemit.channell@crimelab.arkansas.gov](mailto:kemit.channell@crimelab.arkansas.gov) or 501-227-5952.

## Current Turn Around Times

### Drug Chemistry

- Little Rock 5 months
- Hope 4 months

### Toxicology

- Law Enforcement 30 days
- Coroner 30 days
- Medical Examiner 30 days

### Latent Prints

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

### Firearms

- Comparisons (Homicide) 8 months
- Comparisons (Other) 32 months
- NIBIN 15 days

### Digital Evidence

- Computers 60 days
- Mobile Devices 30 days

### Trace Evidence

- Ignitable Liquids 30 days
- Primer GSR 4 months

### Serology

- Homicide 30 days
- Sexual Assault 40 days
- Property/Other 12 Months

### DNA

- Homicide 7 months
- Sexual Assault Kits 6 months
- Property/Other 24 months

## ASCL Training Opportunities

Stay tuned!! The ASCL is partnering with ALETA and their ACADIS program to bring training in the following areas in 2020:

- Firearms & Toolmarks/Latent Prints;
- DNA/CODIS;
- Drugs/Toxicology;
- Evidence Packaging & SA Kit Tracking/Field Investigation



## Legislative Updates

### **Act 839: SA Kit Requirements**

This Act established sexual assault legislation that requires the tracking, submitting and testing of all sexual assault kits collected. This very important piece of legislation now requires the following:

- All kits are given a unique number and shall be tracked using the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory Sexual Assault Kit Tracking Program (Lab - to health care provider – law enforcement – back to lab for testing)
- All kits collected from health care providers shall be taken into law enforcement custody in 3 days or sooner
- All kits in the custody of law enforcement shall be submitted to the lab within 15 days or sooner
- All kits shall be tested in 60 days

It should also be noted that the survivor of sexual assault will be provided with a unique number to allow them to track the kit through the criminal justice system. No results or sensitive data will be displayed in this tracking system.

### **Act 1010: NIBIN Database Changes**

This Act streamlines the NIBIN (ballistics database) process in order to accurately reflect the abilities of the ASCL with assisting law enforcement.

- A firearm used in the commission of a crime that comes into custody of a law enforcement agency **may** be delivered to the lab within 30 days – testing for firearms meeting the caliber and type determined by the Director.

This Act ultimately lets the lab determine what analysis should be done based on the current science and that would be beneficial for entry in to the NIBIN database.

### **Act 1001: 12-12-312 Confidentiality of Records Changes**

The laboratory shall grant access to records to a defendant's criminal case to the following:

- *The defendant*
- The public defender or **other attorney of record** for the defendant
- The prosecuting attorney or deputy prosecution attorney having jurisdiction over the criminal case

*Please contact the laboratory if you have not registered for the required sexual assault kit tracking program or have questions regarding the Acts listed above.*

## Section Focus — Clandestine Laboratories

Manufacturing cases across the state have changed over time. In the past, we predominantly saw methamphetamine labs, but the current manufacturing trend is marijuana and mushroom grows. If law enforcement has encountered an illicit lab and have questions or need assistance, please contact us. Our goal for assisting is to make sure that samples are collected safely and that the correct evidence is being submitted to properly assess the type of lab. Our senior Illicit Lab Chemist is Norman Kemper. He works in our Little Rock lab and also teaches clan lab recertification courses. Brandon Davis (in our Lowell Lab) can also assist. Please contact them if you are in need of assistance on a potential lab. If you are interested in being re-certified, please contact Norman.

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501-683-6203

Brandon Davis: [Brandon.davis@crimelab.arkansas.gov](mailto:Brandon.davis@crimelab.arkansas.gov)  
479-365-8707

## Retirement Announcement



Take  
Note

After 37 years of service to the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory, Lisa Channell is retiring this month. She has finished her career as the Section Chief of the Physical Evidence section. Her knowledge and experience will be missed!

## Staffing Updates — New Hires

Since the publication of our Spring 2019 newsletter, we have hired a few new employees:

- ★ Roberto Bernal, DNA
- ★ Brianna Hoyt, DNA
- ★ Kyle Burgener, DNA
- ★ Nicole Gaile, Evidence Receiving (Lowell)
- ★ Emily Harris, Evidence Receiving (Lowell)
- ★ Chloe Cantrell, Firearms and Toolmarks
- ★ Emme Copeland, Evidence Receiving
- ★ Keeley Johnson, Toxicology
- ★ Freddie Rivera, DNA



## Lowell Regional Lab is Open!!!

The new ASCL Lowell Regional Lab (Forensic Chemistry and Toxicology sections) opened October 1! We have received 1,166 drug cases and 153 toxicology cases so far. This laboratory is benefiting the entire state by allowing the Little Rock lab to focus on other areas of the state.

### Lowell Satellite Lab



### ASCL- Little Rock Renovation



**New Physical Evidence—Serology laboratory and reporting stations**

## Sexual Assault Kit Tracking (New Points of Contact)

Thank you to those who have signed up to use the Sexual Assault Kit tracking program. We now have **68 Medical Facilities** and **114 Law Enforcement Agencies** using the program!

This Sexual Assault Kit program tracks all distributed kits . This program is very easy to use and has several benefits:

- ◆ This program helps to comply with the inventory process required by Act 1168 of 2015 and tracking requirements of Act 839 of 2019
- ◆ The health care provider or law enforcement agency can track all their kits and the progress of testing
- ◆ The victim can see the progress of their kit through the Criminal Justice System

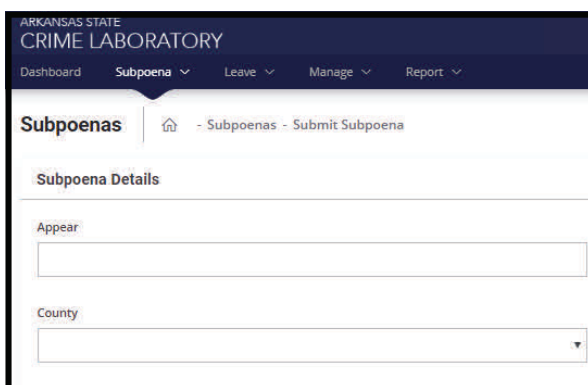
### How To Sign Up:

- **Click on the SA Kit Banner on the ASCL website ([www.crimelab.arkansas.gov](http://www.crimelab.arkansas.gov))**
- OR**
- **Call Andrea Swift or Anne Cameron @ 501-683-6100**

## ATTENTION CASE COORDINATORS...Introducing New Subpoena Calendar – LASSO!

In July, the ASCL launched its new Subpoena Calendar software, LASSO. What does this mean? The new LASSO software will replace the current calendar. It will not only allow you to check an analyst's calendar, but also electronically submit your subpoenas. This streamlines the subpoena coordination process for you and us. In order to use LASSO, you will need to 'create an account'.

Once accepted, you will see a new and improved subpoena calendar with enhanced features.




⇒ Subpoenas are being coordinated by:

- \* **Kelle Hutson:** Homicides — (501) 683-6114
- \* **Nicole Gaile:** NW AR Drugs/Toxicology—(479) 365-8718
- \* **Emily Harris:** NW AR Drugs/Toxicology—(479) 365-8717
- \* **Isabel Higgins-Threats:** All other cases — (501) 683-6149

**For questions about LASSO, please contact Isabel Higgins-Threats.**



## Digital Evidence Section Relocation

Over the past two decades, the collection and analysis of digital evidence has become an increasingly important tool for solving crimes. As technology has become more portable and powerful, greater amounts of information are created, stored, and accessed. Modern devices, especially with the advancement in cell phones, can serve as huge repositories of personal information.

Since the demand for Digital Evidence is increasing, the Department of Public Safety Divisions of the Arkansas State Police and the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory have consolidated space and resources in order to become the state's premier resource for Forensic Digital Evidence analysis. Please contact Jeff Taylor if you have any questions.

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## Arkansas State Crime Laboratory—2019-2021 Strategic Plan

Continuous improvement is a focus of the crime lab to meet the changing needs of our employees and our customers. For that reason, we have recently developed a new 3 year strategic plan. A few of the details are below.

### GOALS

1. Complete cases in a timely manner to meet our customer's expectations
2. Promote an employee centered culture
3. Provide information and education to our Criminal Justice partners and Department of Public Safety Divisions
4. Promote continuous improvement and efficiency

## MEASUREMENT OBJECTIVES

1. All disciplines report analytical results to our customers within 60 days
2. Maintain at least a 90% retention rate of all staff
3. Provide effective communications quarterly
4. Teach efficiency tools to each Department of Public Safety Division
5. Maintain ANAB and NAME accreditations
6. Maintain Foresight 20/20 Maximus Award—90% Efficient Laboratory

# ARKANSAS STATE CRIME LABORATORY

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## 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 with 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

## Customer Feedback

We want to hear from you! Tell us where we are doing well and where you would like to see improvements. We will be changing our survey format in February with a new link, but currently, you can give us your feedback at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/78DK8M6>

### This is what we you are telling us....

- Our Evidence Submission process, staff and submission sheet are meeting your needs.
- The Laboratory Reports are clear and the results are easy to understand.
- Your turn-around time needs are generally 30-60 days.

### Improvements you would like to see:

*"Staffing! I know you agree as well and I know it takes money but this is something that needs to take place or set up labs in various places of the state for example Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast Arkansas."*

### Positive experiences...

*"Each person there does a great job and are always helpful."*

