

Midwest Forensics Resource Center

Quarterly Update

January 15, 2012

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To view past issues of the MFRC Newsletter, please visit www.ameslab.gov/mfrc and log into Partners Web. If you need help accessing the Partners site, please contact the MFRC office at 515-296-MFRC or email mfrc@ameslab.gov.

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News



SWGSTAIN:
The next SWGSTAIN meeting, sponsored by the MFRC, is scheduled for April 15-20, 2012 in Salt Lake City, UT.

Education:
If you have input or suggestions for educational efforts, please contact Todd Zdorkowski at 515-294-5640 or zdorkowski@ameslab.gov.

MFRC Annual Meeting:
The MFRC Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2012 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Columbus, OH. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the Midwest Crime Lab Directors Annual Meeting (May 15-16) at the same location. At our annual meeting, principal investigators from a number of our research projects present the results of their work, followed by discussion on our entire program of work. This is a great time for stakeholders to provide input on what we should be doing in the coming year.



Participants at the SWGSTAIN meeting held in Salt Lake City, UT November 6-11, 2011



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Casework Assistance

The MFRC currently receives a constant level of requests for referrals for services. We welcome these inquiries, as well as any requests for other types of consultation or analyses. In addition to providing referrals to existing services, this program is designed to provide free access to new expertise and instrumentation.

If you would like more information, or to discuss the casework assistance program, please let us know. We would be happy to discuss the pro-

gram, answer any questions you may have, and walk through the process with you. Stan Bajic, the Casework Assistance Coordinator, can be reached at 515-294-2086 or via email at sjbajic@ameslab.gov.



Casework Assistance by the MFRC

Training

Training during the last quarter:

Post-Mortem Analyses in Forensic Toxicology was held Oct. 4-7, 2011 in Ames, IA. The class had 24 participants from 22 states and 22 forensic laboratories or law enforcement organizations.

Upcoming Training:

Best Practices in Forensic Science Management

This class is scheduled in two parts. The first part will take place over five days in June 2012, and the second will take place during three days in September. Classes will be held in Omaha, Nebraska. This class is intended for those considering the transition from analyst to manager, who are making the transition, or who are new to crime laboratory management. It may also be useful for those who have more experience. The class will address the changing duties required of an individual making the transition from analyst to supervisor/manager, and the new skills he or she will need. It will describe the role of the manager in a laboratory, the fundamentals of staff management, the management of time and manpower, fiscal and budgetary management, techniques of delegation, and ethics.

The instructors for the class are Dr. Anthony Hendrickson and Laura Mizaur. Dr. Hendrickson is the Dean of the College of Business and Professor of Information Systems Management at Creighton University. Laura Mizaur is a licensed CPA, who teaches courses in Accounting, Management, and Innovation in the College of Business Administration at Creighton University. Dr. Hendrickson developed the class for the MFRC on the basis of laboratory director requests and

inputs. The two have taught the class in the past, and have modified it, sequentially, on the basis of student feedback. A formal class announcement and pre-registration information will be made available soon.

For more information, contact Cindy Eckhart at 515-294-0380 or ceckhart@ameslab.gov with the subject line "Attention: Crime Laboratory Management class".



Participants at the Post Mortem class held Oct. 4-7, 2011



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MFRC Training Website:

The MFRC Training site contains information on upcoming MFRC training, links to other sources of forensic training, MFRC training materials available for download, and a report on the MFRC's past training activities. The site is available at: <http://www.ameslab.gov/mfrc/training>.

MFRC Training and Professional Development Program Summary:

A brief history of the MFRC's forensic science training programs was recently published. It is available for download from the MFRC's web page. This document provides a 10-year picture of the 73 forensic science training classes the MFRC has sponsored. One section of the document is a chronological list of classes and yearly progress while the other contains sample course outlines.

If you are interested the document is available on the MFRC training website, under the download link.



2011 Training and Professional Development Program Summary booklet

R & D Programs

In response to our 2011 Request for Proposals, we received 17 research and development proposals. Contracts are currently being negotiated for the three projects selected for funding. The PIs will have 12 months to complete the work proposed, write the final report, and make project presentations.

The following is a list of the new projects:

“Chemical Characterization of Emerging Designer Drugs” (Jeremiah Morris, Johnson County Sheriff’s Office Crime Lab). This project monitors and analyzes emerging designer drugs to provide forensic drug chemists with the analytical data necessary to identify synthetic cannabinoids and substituted cathinones.

“Development of a New Model to Study Firearms Related Blood Spatter” (Michael Taylor, ESR, New Zealand, and Kevin Winer, Kansas City Police Crime Lab). This project focuses on the design and construction of a physical model to simulate the formation of gunshot-related blood spatter to answer case-related questions.

“Random Probability Match Procedure for Statistical Comparison of Mass Spectral Data” (Ruth Waddell-Smith, Michigan State University in collaboration with the Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory in Anchorage, AK, and the North-eastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory in Vernon Hills, IL) . This project targets the development of a method to determine the significance of associations in the comparison of evidence.

The three new projects, along with nine ongoing projects, are highlighted in the 2011 Research and Development Program Summary booklet. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the 2011 booklet, please contact Rudi Luyendijk at 515-294-2931 or rluyendi@ameslab.gov.

Projects highlighted provide a description of the innovative technology or new tool, the need the project addresses, its experimental design and methodology, partners and collaborators, as well as accomplishments made, benefits derived, and findings presented. Also included is a brief discussion of plans to continue the research project or to implement the new technology or tool.

Technical Innovations in Management & Infrastructure (TIMI)

In collaboration with Iowa State University and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Forensic Science Lab (BCA) in St. Paul, MN, we started a new project called “Automating Crime Laboratory Evidence Submission.” The project targets the development of an expert system to improve the intake of evidence at crime laboratories and to reduce the need for follow-up phone calls.

The PIs recently developed a prototype of the expert system for Drug Evidence submittal. As building blocks, the PIs used the methodology

currently in use by the BCA supplemented by actual evidence intake information received from BCA evidence technicians. The prototype will be installed January 2012 and used for evidence technician training and testing. Once adjustments are made, the prototype will be expanded to incorporate all other BCA evidence intake tasks and activities.

Contact the MFRC

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Research and Development Program Summary

November 2011

2011 Research and Development Program Summary booklet

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