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Newsletter for the Employees of Ames Laboratory ■ Volume 19, Number 6 ■ June 2008

Midwest Forensics Resource Center Receives \$3 Million in Funding

Money to help develop new analysis and evaluation techniques

The Midwest Forensics Resource Center will receive approximately \$3 million in 2008 from the National Institute of Justice.

According to U.S. Rep. Tom Latham, who announced the award, the money will be used to work on cutting-edge developments in analysis and evaluation techniques in forensics. The money for the MFRC is part of an overall \$8.23 million federal appropriation for projects at Iowa State University.

"The Midwest Forensics Resource Center continues to demonstrate its importance in cutting-edge developments in forensic analysis and evaluation," says Congressman Latham. "It is because of its demonstrated

leadership that I am proud to secure funds for the center."

The MFRC has been in existence since 2002, and 13 states across the Midwest make up

"The MFRC continues to demonstrate its importance in cutting-edge developments in forensic analysis and evaluation." ~ Congressman Tom Latham

the membership of the MFRC.

According to David Baldwin, MFRC director, the center has had many accomplishments in its short time in existence, both in training and research.

"We've provided dozens of training courses to hundreds of forensic analysts and examiners," says Baldwin. "We've also funded approximately 50

R&D science projects, which have either gone on to become even larger R&D projects or have solved problems for crime laboratories."

Although the National Institute of Justice funds will be available in 2008, Baldwin says the money can be spent over the next few years. During that period, Baldwin says the MFRC will continue to focus its efforts on funding R&D projects in forensic science.

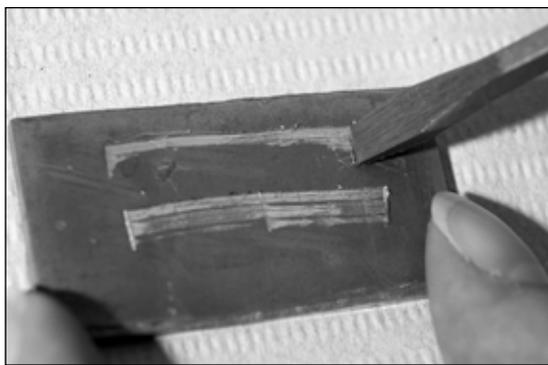
"We are the only program outside the NIJ that the NIJ

funds to run an R&D program," says Baldwin. "This is due to our efforts to use external peer reviewers to make sure we're running a solid program."

In addition to research, the MFRC will continue its training efforts. Some key topical areas in training include drug analysis, fiber and hair analysis, bloodstain pattern analysis and toxicology.

"We have a close relationship with people in the field and know in what areas they're asking for professional assistance," says Baldwin. "We're proud of the program we've put together by focusing on the needs of the crime labs." ■

~ Steve Karsjen



The MFRC's wide-ranging forensic research includes detecting steganography, a method of hiding computer files within another file (left); characterizing tool marks (center); and analyzing the chemical makeup of pen inks (right).