



# THE LAB REPORT



VOLUME 2 NO. 1

SPRING 2016

WEST VIRGINIA  
STATE POLICE  
FORENSIC  
LABORATORY

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Backlog Corner
- Employee Spotlight
- Rush Requests
- Road Show!

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## BACKLOG CORNER

We wanted to provide a friendly reminder to all our submitting agencies that when cases are submitted the analyst does not typically know the details of the investigation. Often the case can sit unworked in our backlog and said case has been dismissed for one reason or another without the knowledge of the lab. These cases that

no longer need analysis can greatly reduce our backlog number, if that information is reported to us. We ask you be mindful of those with active cases who are waiting to be worked behind cases that may be inactive. Please notify the laboratory when a case no longer needs analysis!

### INCOMPLETE CASES PER SECTION:

Biochemistry: 590  
 Central Evidence Processing: 416  
 Drug Identification: 2810  
 Firearm/Toolmark Identification: 100  
 Latent Prints: 68  
 Questioned Documents: 6  
 Toxicology: 760  
 Trace Evidence: 16  
**Total: 4766**



## PRE-2016 TOXICOLOGY CASES OUTSOURCED

### Erin Spearen Supervisor Toxicology Section

Due to the hard work of law enforcement and the increasing numbers of impaired drivers on the road, the Toxicology Section received almost 1200 cases in 2015. Currently

there is one analyst who is qualified to perform drug testing on blood samples. Due to the limited staff, limited instrumentation, amount of time required for testing, and the short time frame to prosecute DUI cases, the Toxicology Section, WVSPFL

Management, and the WVSP asked for assistance from the Commission on Drunk Driving Prevention and the Governor's Highway Safety Program to provide funding to outsource cases that have been submitted to our **(continued on next page)**

## CONT: TOXICOLOGY CASES OUTSOURCED

laboratory for Toxicology Drug Analysis. NMS Labs (<http://www.nmslabs.com/>) has been selected as a competent subcontractor who complies with accreditation guidelines ISO/IEC 17025:2005. NMS Labs will be testing samples for drugs contained on their 8150B Proof Positive DUID/DRE Panel. This panel contains approximately 65 different compounds. Currently the laboratory only tests for approximately 29 compounds. Funding for the testing of samples will be the responsibility of the Laboratory; however, if discovery packages or testimony services are required, those additional costs will not be covered by the Laboratory and will have to be paid for

by DMV or the Prosecutor's Office.

The outsourcing of cases will allow the analyst who works these cases to focus on the 2016 cases that are being submitted. Expedited letters will no longer be accepted and the cases will be worked in the order that they are received. Additionally, the Toxicology Section recently purchased two new instruments that will be used in the testing of drugs in the blood. These instruments and an additional analyst should be available for use in casework by the end of 2016. Another benefit of the new instruments will be an expanded panel of drugs for which the lab will be able to test.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: CARRIE KIRKPATRICK



**Hometown:** Glenville, WV

**Education:** B.S. Degree in Chemistry and Biology from Glenville State College

**Work Experience:** WVSP Forensic Laboratory, Drug Identification Section, since 2001

**Role at the WVSP Forensic Laboratory:** I have been the section supervisor for the Drug Identification Section since March 2011. I am crossed-trained in the Toxicology section specifically Blood Alcohol Content cases. I supervise three full-time analysts and have two analysts in training. I perform casework, issue reports, and testify in court as necessary. I work with the law enforcement officers as well as the prosecuting attorneys to determine case status and for case assignments.

**Favorite part of job:** I take pride in working for the WVSP. My favorite part of the job is seeing the different trends evolve in the drug world. The drug trends are constantly changing and it is amazing to me to see the new substances emerging. I also enjoy working with the task force officers as well as other law enforcement officers to assist in building their cases. I have made a lot of friends in the law enforcement community throughout my career.

# CENTRAL EVIDENCE RECEIVING

**Dave Miller**  
**Supervisor**  
**Central Evidence Processing**

The WVSP Forensic Laboratory, Central Evidence Receiving (CER) Section, has moved into its new facility at the west end of the lower floor at Headquarters. The entire lower wing of the old Traffic Records Section was renovated into a new evidence receiving unit. Officers are now able to come inside to a dedicated evidence reception area.

**HOURS OF OPERATION:** CER's normal hours of operation are M-F from 0830 to 1630 hours. If you have large items of evidence, including vehicles, or a large number of submissions, please call ahead at 304-746-2473. Please do not bring in large quantities of evidence just prior to closing, as all items must be entered into the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) prior to the close of business each day.



Photograph showing the new area to drop off evidence to the WVSP Forensic Laboratory.

# CONT: CENTRAL EVIDENCE RECEIVING

## INCOMING CASES:

In 2015, CER accepted 6924 submissions.

3664 Drug cases

1139 Toxicology Cases

1056 Latent Print Cases

624 DNA cases

225 Trace Evidence Cases

152 Firearm/Toolmark Cases

64 Questioned Document Cases

## VEHICLE SUBMISSIONS:

All vehicle submissions must be called on prior to delivery to confirm that garage space is available (two vehicle capacity). The WVSP Evidence Garage is equipped with a vehicle lift, and is located next to the new reception area. As a reminder, vehicles must be delivered and returned with an accompanying officer, and will not be released directly to owners, insurance companies, tow services, or other parties.



Photograph showing the new area to drop off evidence to the WVSP Forensic Laboratory.

# CENTRAL EVIDENCE PROCESSING: NEW LAB SPACE

**Dave Miller**  
**Supervisor**  
**Central Evidence Processing**

Also, the WVSP Forensic Laboratory, Central Evidence Processing Section, has moved. The laboratory is now located in the former Communications Section radio room, which has been renovated into an entirely new lab. The space available to examine and process physical evidence for biological material has more than doubled.

The move also places the processing lab close to the DNA laboratory, consolidates the Processing Section into one space, and allows the Latent Print Section to expand their operation into the entire existing space that we formerly shared.

The Central Evidence Receiving and Processing Section would like to thank Colonel Smithers, Major Scott, Sheri Lemons, the Biochemistry Section, and the entire construction crew for their work on this project.

See the before and after pictures.....



# ATTENTION: CASE RUSH REQUESTS!

**Staci Taylor**  
**LIMS Manager**

The laboratory receives approximately 7000 cases each year. Depending on the analysis requested, turnaround time can vary from a few days to a few months. With a decrease in the number of staff and an increase in the backlog, requests for expedited analysis have increased dramatically.

The Drug Identification Section has the largest backlog and consequently the

most requests for expedited analysis, averaging approximately 75 per month. The Toxicology Section receives approximately 20 requests per month. This averages to 30% or more of the total number of cases completed each month in these two disciplines as being “rush” cases.

Often rush requests are sent to the Laboratory for recently submitted evidence rather than for cases that are in the back-

log. When these cases are pulled out of sequence in response to a rush request, older cases are pushed further back and newer cases are, in turn, added to the backlog. Although all cases are important, not every case can be a “rush” case. Timely submission of evidence and communication with the Laboratory regarding case status updates can help to reduce the backlog and the need for expedited analysis requests.

Section	Average # Rush Requests Received per Month	Current Turnaround for Rush Requests	Amount of Time Needed for Future Requests*
Toxicology	20	3-4 months	5 months
Biochemistry (DNA)	8	10 days-3 weeks	3 months
Firearms/Toolmarks	5	10 days-3 weeks	1 month
Drug Identification	75	2-4 weeks	1 month
Processing (serology)	5	8 days	2 weeks
Trace Evidence	2	1 week	2 weeks
Questioned Documents	-	3 days-1 week	2 weeks
Latent Prints	-	1-2 days	2 days

**\*Note:** These timeframes are dependent on the specified Section having the evidence in its possession. If the same item of evidence is to be examined by multiple Sections, then the timeframe for all Sections to complete the requested examinations must be considered.

# INTERNSHIPS / EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Sheri Lemons**

**Acting Laboratory Director / Quality Assurance Manager**

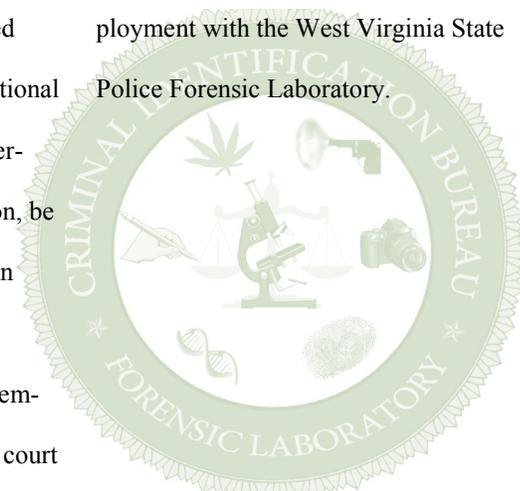
The West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory welcomes student interns and applications from individuals interested in employment with the forensic laboratory. Students may apply for internships through the WV Governor's Internship Program. Visit the program at <http://www.intern.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx> to learn more about our internship opportunities. Anyone interested in employment with the laboratory

may review, complete, and submit an application downloaded from

<http://www.wvsp.gov/employment/Pages/CrimeLabEmployment.aspx>.

Along with an application, interested parties should submit current educational transcripts, and upon successful interview and consideration for a position, be prepared to successfully complete an extensive background examination (including polygraph). Laboratory employees must conduct and testify in court to laboratory evidence handling and test-

ing and, therefore, must exhibit the utmost character and integrity. Some behaviors such as drug use and other illegal activities may prevent successful employment with the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory.



## QUOTES FROM OUR CUSTOMERS:

“Due to the hard work and dedication of the WVSP Crime Lab, the finishing touches were put on a case that was investigated by many.”

**Sgt. J. E. Shriver**  
**WV State Police Hundred Detachment**

“I wanted to personally thank you and your staff for what you do...I know over my career the analysis performed has been pivotal in solving the case.”

**Lt. D. B. Swiger**  
**Crimes Against Children Unit, WVSP**

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your recent assistance with the ... murder trial here in Upshur

County...Your testimony was outstanding - professional, clear and honest.

**S/Tpr. R. A. Moss**  
**Buckhannon, WV**

“I have had tremendous success through you guys on forensic evidence. Some things I still can't wrap my head around...Thanks for all you guys do.”

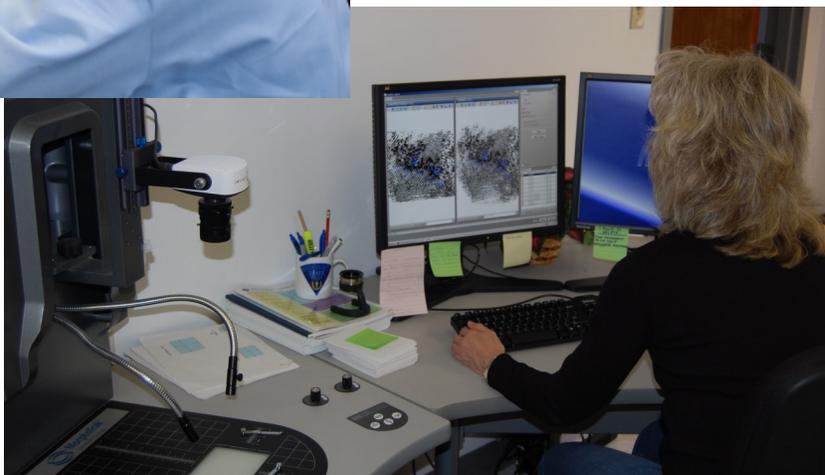
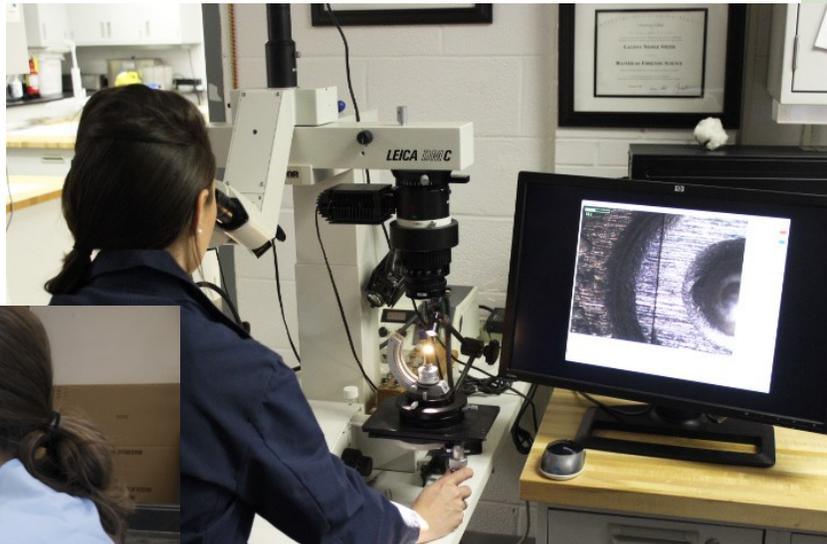
**Det. Candan Sharp**  
**Charleston Police Department**

# LABORATORY TOURS

**Sheri Lemons**

**Acting Laboratory Director / Quality Assurance Manager**

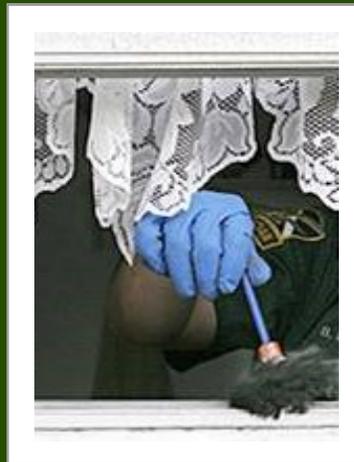
Tours of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory are often requested by students, various community organizations and other interested parties across the state. Laboratory analysts and technicians and administrative staff are proud of the work that is performed in our laboratory and want to take every opportunity available to educate the community about forensic science. However, because of confidentiality requirements and the sensitivity of the evidence we handle and test, care must be taken to limit these visits. There are many alternatives to a facility tour available to those interested in learning about our forensic laboratory including information on our website <http://www.wvsp.gov/about/Pages/CrimeLab.aspx> and the laboratory newsletter, also available on the website.



# The Crime Lab Road Show

The West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory is starting to provide training opportunities for law enforcement, attorneys, and judges! To help us do this we need volunteer agencies to host a one day training opportunity. If you are an interested party please contact Blake N. Reta. (contact information below)

- One day training opportunity for any law enforcement agencies, attorneys, and judges.
- Maximum of 30 attendees.
- Training will feature 1 to 2 sections of the forensic laboratory for lecture and hands on experience with evidence collection.
- The sections that will be providing training will be agreed upon by the forensic laboratory and the volunteer host.



**Note: The training provided will be free to the attendees!**

**What we are asking of the host agency:**

- Provide an area (local school, department complex, etc) for training to occur
- Provide material needed for the training

**West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory**

Blake N. Reta  
Email: [blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov](mailto:blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov)  
Phone: 304-746-2171

**Sections of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory that can provide lecture / training include:**

- |                        |                       |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| - Biochemistry         | - Drug Identification | - Evidence Processing |
| - Firearm/Toolmark     | - Footwear/Tire Track | - Latent Prints       |
| - Questioned Documents | - Toxicology          | - Trace Evidence      |

## LABORATORY STAFF:

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**Trace Evidence:** [trace@wvsp.gov](mailto:trace@wvsp.gov)

## FEEDBACK

We always welcome feedback for the upcoming newsletter!

Have comments or suggestion?

Want to know how we do something?

Need to know how we recommend to collect a specific type of evidence?

Feel free to contact the editors and suggest topics and provide us with any comments or feedback.

Your Editors,

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## Laboratory Mission and Goal

### Mission:

It is the mission of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory to provide accurate and impartial scientific support services to all criminal justice agencies operating in the State of West Virginia.

### Goal:

The goal of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory is to generate accurate, impartial, and timely scientific examinations and opinions for the criminal justice system of the State in the interest of public safety. Establish and maintain a database of convicted felons, sex offenders, case work profiles, and missing persons.

# LABORATORY STAFF:

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