In September, the NFSTC was proud to support the Missing Person Regional Training East Conference held in Clearwater Beach, Florida. While in the area for this conference, the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, Regina B. Schofield gave opening remarks at a press conference, which was held at the NFSTC facility in Largo. The purpose of the press conference was to announce award funding under the President’s DNA Initiative, Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology. Included in this announcement was an impressive $3.8 million to support the NFSTC in their efforts to develop a DNA Analyst Training program.

The NFSTC has also grown geographically. Two satellite offices were established in 2005. The offices are located in Virginia and Arizona. These new offices, as well as the Largo facility, are publicly funded and available for use as needed by the community.

In yet another effort to keep our stakeholders informed, the NFSTC website www.NFSTC.org has been updated and redesigned. We encourage our stakeholders to visit the site frequently for the most up-to-date information about the NFSTC programs being provided through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Justice.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Mike Sheppo for his many years of leadership as President of the NFSTC Board of Directors. He provided strong leadership, especially through the years of transition and growth. His leadership was instrumental to the success of the organization.

Elizabeth Carpenter
President
Overview

Our VISION is for the forensic science community and its users to have complete confidence in the quality of the science provided to the justice community.

Our MISSION is that we are dedicated to assisting the forensic sciences in the achievement of the highest level of quality services for the justice community.

Funded through Cooperative Agreements (2000-RC-CX-K001 and 2004-DN-BX-K001) with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a unit of the Office of Justice Programs, the NFSTC provides goods and services at no cost to public state and local crime laboratories.

The programs funded through the Agreement fall into three general categories:
- Technical Assistance
- Training
- Community Outreach

The federal budget for fiscal year 2005 included $5.7M in support of all programs. The budget includes $3.8M in award funding under the President’s DNA Initiative, Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology, which was announced by Assistant Attorney General Regina Schofield at a press conference held at the NFSTC. Paul Perez, U.S. Attorney, also addressed the press at the conference.

In August 2005, the NFSTC was also awarded $.7M under a Cooperative Agreement (#X3-83271101-0) by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to facilitate the process by which the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) becomes a self-sufficient entity.
Audits and Assessments

External DNA Audits

DNA testing laboratories are subject to much scrutiny and must confirm that they meet the national quality assurance standards for DNA analysis. Laboratories providing DNA analysis are required to withstand an external audit every other year. Utilizing the FBI National QA Standards for DNA analysis, the NFSTC DNA Audit Program provides a mechanism to insure that DNA laboratories are providing valid, quality data for entry into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). Although the NFSTC provides a thorough audit, it is not an accreditation.

Free of charge, the NFSTC provides biannual external DNA Laboratory Audits to public crime laboratories performing DNA analysis. The DNA Audit program began in 2002 with a total of 34 completed DNA laboratory audits. In 2003, another 58 DNA laboratories were audited and in 2004 the total annual no-cost audits reached 81 laboratories. During 2005, an additional 70 DNA audits were conducted, bringing the total number of audits performed to 243 since the program’s inception.

Grant Progress Assessments

Effective January 1, 2005, the program was expanded to include a component for the review of DNA grants received by laboratories. The NIJ provides hundreds of millions of dollars in grant funds to state and local crime laboratories for the analysis of convicted offender and forensic casework samples. As part of the NIJ Grant Administration responsibilities, there is an obligation to review the status and impact of these grants by conducting site visits to grant recipients. Together, the NIJ and the NFSTC developed the Grant Progress Assessment (GPA) program to ascertain adherence to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) grant and contract requirements. The NIJ requested that the NFSTC assist in overseeing the program. An NIJ award of $1.0M was provided to the NFSTC to cover the costs of the combined DNA Audit and GPA Program. In 2005, a total of 47 Grant Progress Assessments were conducted.

Beginning in mid-2006, the assessment program will again be expanded at the request of the NIJ with the review of Coverdell and Cold Case grant awards. It is anticipated that this expansion will increase the number of assessments considerably, requiring the addition of assessor and program management resources.
Quality Documents

Quality Manual Template

Created by the NFSTC and a group of quality managers, the Quality Documents program is comprised of an easy-to-use Quality Manual Template and over 90 document samples. This program is designed to be used as a guideline for crime laboratories in the creation of customized quality documents that meet the laboratory’s needs for a comprehensive quality system.

The Quality Documents are available through the NFSTC website: [http://nfstc.org/programs/index.htm](http://nfstc.org/programs/index.htm) (Click on Quality Documents)

Detailed instructions for downloading the files or directly accessing the documents are included.

2005 Program Expansion

The program was expanded in 2005 to include an ISO 17025 component. In October, 420 CD-ROM copies of Introduction to Accreditation for Forensic Labs by Malcolm and Peel were shipped to all identified U.S. public crime laboratories. This document is an excellent primer on accreditation and provides easy to read explanations and discussions regarding the ISO 17025:2005 standards.

2006 Expansion Plans

The next phase of the program includes two additions, which are in the final stages of development. Through a licensing agreement, 420 copies of the recently updated ISO 17025:2005 standards were purchased. In addition, a reference program containing a template standards file and associated reference documents is presently in final review. Both of these program additions will be distributed to recipient laboratories in 2006.

On the drawing board is a plan to work directly with the accrediting bodies to develop a document relating to the issues of uncertainty of measurement and measurement traceability.

Technical Assistance
The Field Investigation Drug Officer program is designed to provide officers from law enforcement agencies with a recommended practice guide for performing standardized testing of controlled substances in the field. The guide is comprised of a comprehensive training section, quality assurance guidelines, and established testing processes.

Use of the program reinforces confidence in field testing results at a consensus level for prosecutors and the courts. It is intended to assist the criminal justice process by allowing for the acceptance of field testing results during the preliminary arraignment or plea bargain stages of controlled substance cases. The benefits include immediate investigative information without the need for extensive laboratory analysis as well as facilitation of case adjudication in the preliminary phase.

Based on the evaluation of an existing model, operated by the Phoenix Police Department, the effective implementation of the Field Investigation Drug Officer (FIDO) program was fashioned to allow for the field testing of four major controlled substances commonly submitted to laboratories: cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin. It is flexible enough to be utilized in its totality or the individual sections pertaining to a specific controlled substance may be adopted.

A focus group consisting of representatives from the law enforcement, forensic science, corrections, legal, and judicial communities was established to facilitate development and deployment.

The draft program documents have been completed and evaluated with the pilot testing phase to be initiated in 2006.
The NFSTC partnered with the Technical Working Group for Fire and Explosions (TWGFEX) and the National Center for Forensic Science (NCFS) in Orlando to produce a set of instructions and flammable liquids for use by a laboratory in the validation of fire debris analysis methods. After an intensive review and extensive testing by several referee laboratories, the final kit was completed and assembled.

Beginning in early 2006, 151 kits were distributed to laboratories presently conducting the analysis of fire debris. The recipient laboratories are scheduled to evaluate the kit over the next six months.

The NELAC is a standards adoption organization comprised of voluntary State and Federal officials. Its purpose is to foster the generation of environmental laboratory data of known and documented quality in a cost-effective manner. The NELAC supports the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)’s National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP), which applies the NELAC Standard in its process of assessing State Accrediting Authorities (AA’s).

A consultant who has experience in facilitation, business planning and strategic planning has been employed to help with the project. The NFSTC will facilitate the process to develop a business plan and strategies that will help the NELAC become a self-sustaining organization. Working closely with the NELAC Self Sufficiency Task Group, whose membership includes NELAC/NELAP Director Lara Autry (Cooperative Agreement Program Manager), the work on the project will span a five year period.
In support of the PDI Analyst Training program, the NFSTC is offering the opportunity for DNA analysts from publicly funded crime laboratories to participate in a series of workshops.

Four workshops have been held:
- Population Genetics / Statistics
- DNA Validation
- GeneMapper™ID
- Mitochondrial DNA

More workshops are planned for 2006 and will be announced on the NFSTC website.

Analyst Training

Utilizing experience from NFSTC DNA Academies and technology based training (TBT), the NFSTC is creating a resource for training new DNA analysts. The program is funded through the President’s DNA Initiative (PDI) and will be available to public laboratories at no or minimal cost.

The program consists of a theoretical knowledge base presented in multimedia self-paced modules, a practical skills manual for use in the student’s laboratory, web-based resources, and a train-the-trainer module for on-site laboratory training.

Key subject areas include basic biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, population genetics, data analysis and troubleshooting.

Modular self-paced units of instruction can be easily transformed for independent use in other environments, such as crime scene training and continuing education for existing DNA analysts.

Principles of Forensic DNA for Officers of the Court

- Program release announced at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences meeting on 2/22/06.

- Program now available to public on:
  http://www.dna.gov/training/otc

- CD-ROM available through National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).
  To order, go to:
  http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/AlphaList.aspx
  Search for publication # NCJ 212399

Educational and resource tool to empower officers of the court (attorneys and the judiciary) with the knowledge to effectively use forensic DNA evidence as a crime fighting tool. Comprehensive interactive case study and multi-hour training session for delivery at national conferences under development to demonstrate key concepts; visit www.dna.gov for more information.
The forensic community has identified a pending shortage of qualified firearms examiners. Historically, the ranks of these analysts have been filled by sworn law enforcement officers or others who have undergone extensive training and apprenticeships within crime laboratories. The constraints of Daubert and admissibility have pressured the field toward examiners with science degrees and standardized training in their backgrounds. The relatively low number of firearms examiners compared to other disciplines has resulted in a deficit of individual laboratory trainers and mentors.

Working with the Association of Firearms and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE), subject matter experts, and firearms examiners, the NFSTC is developing a training program for newly hired Firearms Examiners. Formatted in technology-based training, with an accompanying practical training guide, the curriculum is designed for use in an academy or laboratory setting.

**Using and Presenting Digital Evidence in the Courtroom**

The Using and Presenting Digital Evidence in the Courtroom program is designed to assist law enforcement and the judiciary in the use of digital evidence in the trial process. It was developed utilizing a mock trial format, capturing critical issues encountered during a trial involving digital evidence.

The live event is incorporated into an interactive training DVD along with additional materials identified by expert participants from the technical working group.

In the final stages of review, the program is scheduled for delivery to the NIJ in the spring of 2006.
Community Outreach

Inform / Gain Input / Support

The purpose of the NFSTC Community Outreach program is to:

- Inform forensic science service delivery agencies about NFSTC programs
- Gain input and feedback from the forensic science and law enforcement communities to assist in targeting our programs and services to their needs
- Support other organizations who support forensic science service delivery

Hosting Services

In support of the forensic science community, the NFSTC hosts justice system related events at our Largo, FL facilities. These include meeting and training rooms as well as laboratory facilities and instrumentation.

Conferences / Events / Focus Groups

To inform as many members of the forensic science community as possible about NIJ programs, the NFSTC and it’s Forensic Resource Network (FRN) partners participate in events, conferences, and focus groups, with numerous organizations including:

- ASCLD
- AFQAM
- IACP (Forensic Science Committee with West Virginia University)
- NIJ
- AAFS / FSAB
- IAI
- IAI Workshop Host 2006
- Promega
- AFTE
- ABC
- Regional Forensic Associations
Stakeholder Feedback

Question asked of the NFSTC Board of Directors and of the Member Organization representatives:
“How has the NFSTC fulfilled the principles of our Mission and Vision statements during 2005?”

Response:

“I believe that NFSTC’s support of the IACP Forensic Committee is fulfilling their mission by the interaction with this committee with this very strong law enforcement professional association and by participating in their programs.”

Carrie Morgan Whitcomb
National Center for Forensic Science (NCFS)
Member Organization Representative for NCFS

Response:

“NFSTC’s services provide essential elements to the forensic science community through successful programs like the DNA Audit Program, which provides no cost audits required by DNA laboratories that participate in the FBI’s National DNA Index System (NDIS). For laboratories receiving grant funding, the NIJ Grant Progress Assessment Program process is made as painless as possible by the NFSTC auditors. The continued economic support of forensic organizations provides a value link to assess the needs of the forensic community. The Quality Documents Program provides laboratories with guidance as they prepare for accreditation based on ISO 17025. The NFSTC continues to develop multimedia training for members of the judiciary and forensic science communities, including the recently released Principles of Forensic DNA for Officers of the Court and President’s DNA Initiative-Analyst Training, currently in development. In another specialty area, the Digital Evidence in the Courtroom program provides training to assist the judiciary and law enforcement in the use of digital evidence in the trial process. Through these programs, among others, it is self evident that we are meeting our Mission and working towards our Vision.”

Frank Dolejsi
Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
Member of the NFSTC Board of Directors

Response:

“NFSTC continually supports the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM) by sponsoring our annual meetings. The financial assistance for this conference has allowed our membership to grow steadily. The subsidy also allows Quality Assurance Managers from laboratories with limited budgets to attend this specialized training.”

Rod Kennette
Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences
Member Organization Representative for AFQAM
Financials

2005 Audit Results

The audited financial statements have been issued to the NFSTC Board of Directors and Member Organizations. The information presented here is a synopsis of the 2005 audit performed by the Certified Public Accounting firm of Lewis, Birch and Ricardo, LLC. The full report is available upon request.

Scope, Reports, and Results

Scope
• Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS)
• Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States
• Provisions of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133
• Period covered - January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005

Reports
• Basic Financial Statements and Supplementary Financial Information
• Internal Control and Compliance Reports:
  • Internal Control and Compliance in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book)
  • Internal Control and Compliance Relative to Each Major Federal Program in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133

Results
• All unqualified or "clean" reports

Summary

Summary of Audit Results
1. The auditors’ report expresses an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of National Forensic Science Technology Center, Inc.
2. No reportable conditions were disclosed during the audit of the financial statements.
3. No instances of noncompliance material to the financial statements of National Forensic Science Technology Center, Inc. were disclosed during the audit.
4. No reportable conditions were disclosed during the audit of the major federal program.
5. The auditors’ report on compliance for the major federal program for National Forensic Science Center, Inc. expresses a unqualified opinion.
6. The program tested as a major federal program was: National Institute of Justice Research, Evaluation, and Development Project Grants (CFDA No. 16.560)
7. The threshold for distinguishing Types A and B programs was $300,000 for major federal programs.
8. National Forensic Science Center, Inc. was not determined to be a low-risk auditee.

Findings - Audit of Financial Statements
None.

Findings and Questioned Costs - Major Federal Award Programs Audit
None.
Summary Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2005 and 2004

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets:</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$316,760</td>
<td>116,740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>477,064</td>
<td>592,279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
<td>475,128</td>
<td>553,944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses and other</td>
<td>37,734</td>
<td>22,508</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>$1,306,686</td>
<td>1,285,471</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$326,845</td>
<td>250,514</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred rent</td>
<td>87,907</td>
<td>66,209</td>
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<td>Capital lease obligation</td>
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<td>37,265</td>
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<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td>414,752</td>
<td>353,988</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net assets:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>416,806</td>
<td>414,804</td>
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<td>Net investment in property and equipment</td>
<td>475,128</td>
<td>516,679</td>
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<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td>891,934</td>
<td>931,483</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td>$1,306,686</td>
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</table>

Summary Statements of Unrestricted Activities
Years Ended December 31, 2005 and 2004

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Support and revenue</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$5,164,816</td>
<td>4,940,792</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating expenses:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIJ cooperative agreement</td>
<td>3,905,251</td>
<td>2,754,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA cooperative agreement</td>
<td>36,571</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other programs</td>
<td>140,796</td>
<td>510,451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting services:</td>
<td>1,269,041</td>
<td>1,459,438</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td>5,351,659</td>
<td>4,723,918</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase (decrease) in net assets from operations</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(186,843)</td>
<td>216,874</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other changes</td>
<td>147,294</td>
<td>116,295</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase (decrease) in net assets</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(39,549)</td>
<td>333,169</td>
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</table>
Financials (continued)

- Travel expense: $712,295
- Total salaries & related expenses: $2,062,976
- Consulting & outsourced services: $1,195,818
- Communications: $35,920
- Other expenses:
  - Recruitment/relocation expenses: $4000
  - Professional fees: $84,905
  - Professional development: $40,485
  - Postage, printing & delivery: $30,648
  - Office supplies & materials: $181,239
  - Miscellaneous: $13,004
  - Meetings & conventions: $35,648
  - Laboratory supplies: $56,668
  - Interest expense: $111
  - Insurance & Licenses: $39,548
  - Equipment expense: $161,455
  - Depreciation & amortization: $237,580

Support Services