



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Department of Criminal Justice Training
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LAW ENFORCEMENT RECEIVE TRAINING IN DNA, COLD CASES

LEXINGTON, Ky. – Countries across the world are moving toward an era in which DNA could be taken from any person arrested for a crime – a tool no longer being used just for violent felony offenders.

It is a move that someday may show a significant decrease in crimes when an offender is able to be identified and imprisoned through DNA more quickly, said Chris Asplen, vice president of Gordon Thomas Honeywell Government Affairs.

Asplen was one of seven speakers Wednesday who addressed DNA, its impact on cold cases and the future of the technology during a DNA Cold Case Investigative Training Seminar.

More than 185 local, state and federal law enforcement professionals attended the training, conducted jointly by the Department of Criminal Justice Training and the Lexington Division of Police.

“DNA is a tool that has been used extensively by you every day and throughout the policing community,” said DOCJT Commissioner John W. Bizzack. “Few tools, if any, have had a [greater](#) impact on criminal justice and certainly police investigations than forensic DNA. Further illustrating that point is the fact that a single-topic seminar can draw this many people in one room in the field of policing. That is probably something of a record.”

Opening the training was retired New York Police Department Detective Sgt. Joseph Blozis, who worked more than 2,500 crime scenes during his career, including the scene at Ground Zero following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Blozis discussed not only all the ways DNA can be the key to unlocking a case, but also its limitations.

“Do not focus solely on DNA evidence,” he said. “Depending on what the lab’s status is, it could take a long time for it to come back. DNA is only a tool.”

The delay in DNA-testing results is an issue Asplen also discussed. As DNA evidence is collected from major crime scenes, felons – and in some states, misdemeanor arrestees – crime labs across the world are working hard to keep up.

“Our lab system was never built for this kind of work,” Asplen said.

Because it can sometimes take a year or longer for results to be returned to officers requesting DNA testing, Asplen said it currently is being used more as a tool for court than an intelligence lead in the United States. Other countries, however, have learned that through obtaining DNA from more criminals and databasing that information, many unnecessary crimes could be prevented.

“Getting DNA at property crimes, that’s the next big thing,” Asplen said. “It makes the most sense, that’s where you can get the biggest bang for your buck.”

Other speakers were:

- **Forensic Anthropologist Dr. Emily Craig, who spoke about why officers can’t always “just do DNA” to solve crimes and the NamUs.gov database for missing and unidentified persons.**
- **Kentucky State Police Lab DNA Analyst Davey McCann, who challenged officers to collect more than physical identifiers when investigating crimes.**
- **DOCJT Instructor Jim Clark, who talked about best practices for cold case investigations.**
- **Bradley Hawkins, Esq., who serves as a legal adviser for the Lexington Homicide Cold Case Task Force and as an Assistant Fayette County Commonwealth’s Attorney. Hawkins discussed the accomplishments and lessons learned of the LHCCTF.**
- **Fayette Commonwealth Attorney’s Office Director of Victim Services Mary Lynn Houlihan, who spoke about the best ways to understand and build cooperative, working relationships with victims of cold case crimes.**

The Department of Criminal Justice Training is a state agency located on Eastern Kentucky University’s campus. The agency is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies and was the first in the nation to be accredited under CALEA’s public safety training program designation. In 2006, the academy also became the first law enforcement training academy in the nation to be named as a CALEA flagship agency.

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