

The Lab Report

Volume 3, Issue 4

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The Lab Report Wrap Up - 2013

As we all wrap up the year 2013, the Nebraska State Patrol Crime Laboratory would like to focus on not only the upcoming year, but also on recapping the past year in numbers. In the final quarterly issue of The Lab Report for 2013, we are providing year-end statistics for the lab. These statistics include the total number of case assignments per unit/section received for the year, the total number of agencies who submitted cases to the NSP Crime Laboratory in 2013, total number of presentations/training provided, the total number of court appearances by laboratory staff, and database (NIBIN, CODIS, & AFIS) statistics!

We will also discuss turnaround times, the NSP Crime Laboratory relocation/new facility construction plans, provide information with regard to RTI International continuing education courses, and hints on efficiently packaging evidence!

If you have any questions/concerns regarding the topics related to this issue of The Lab Report, please do not hesitate to contact us (laboratory staff contact information - pg. 8).

Enjoy!

Amy Weber (Firearm/Toolmark Section Analyst - editor, The Lab Report)

The Backlog Corner

Biology Unit: 147 assignments (approx. 4 month turnaround time)

Physical Sciences Unit:

Firearms/Toolmarks: 36 assignments (approx. 8 month turnaround time)

Footwear/Tire: 3 assignments (approx. 3 month turnaround time)

NIBIN: 94 assignments (approx. 6 month turnaround time)

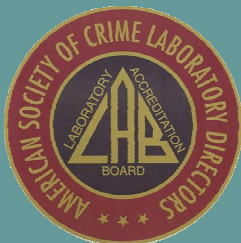
Latent Fingerprints Section: 48 assignments (approx. 4 week turnaround time)

Chemistry Unit:

Controlled Substances: 691 assignments (approx. 3 month turnaround time)

Toxicology: 68 assignments (approx. 2 month turnaround time)

Trace: 6 assignments (approx. 3 month turnaround time)



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NSP Crime Laboratory 2013 Statistical Recap

As we close out the year 2013, the NSP Crime Laboratory would like to provide year-end statistics for the agencies we serve across the state. The crime laboratory staff have been involved in not only case analysis, but also in appearing in court as expert witnesses, and providing educational presentations/trainings throughout the state! Listed below are the NSP Crime Laboratory year-to-date totals (current as of December 28, 2013). The “**Assignments Received/Submitted**” column refers to the total number of cases that were submitted in 2013. The “**Assignments Completed**” column refers to the number of 2013 cases completed plus the number of backlogged cases completed from previous year submissions (e.g. 2012 cases).

	Assignments Received/Submitted in 2013	Assignments Completed (2013 + backlogged cases)
	4877	4960
<u>Chemistry Unit</u>		
Controlled Substances	2860	2902
Toxicology	513	487
Trace Evidence	55	54
<u>Biology Unit</u>		
Biology Casework	574	630
<u>Physical Sciences Unit</u>		
Firearms/Toolmarks (to include Footwear/Tire cases)	135	149
NIBIN	315	348
Latent Fingerprints	406	370
Questioned Documents	19	19

Total Number of Different Agencies Served in 2013: ~ 163

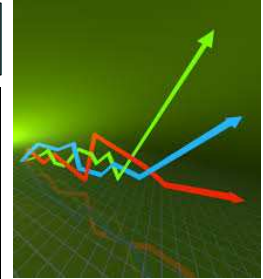
Presentations/Trainings Provided:

Total Number of Presentations/Trainings Provided in 2013: 28

Total Number of Persons Trained/In Attendance in 2013: > 1500



NSP Crime Laboratory 2013 Statistical Recap (continued)



Court Appearance/Testimony Stats:

Total Court Appearances by Lab Staff in 2013: **79**

Total Miles Travelled for Court in 2013: **19,327**

Number of Counties Where Testimony was Provided in 2013: **23**

Number of Overnight Stays to Provide Testimony in 2013: **21**

Database Statistics for 2013:

NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistics Information Network)

NIBIN Hits: **14**

- Number of Firearms Entered into Database: **457**
- Number of Cartridge Cases Entered into Database: **577**
- Number of Bullets Entered into Database: **1**

CODIS (Combined DNA Index System)

CODIS Hits: **74**

- Offender Samples Received (as of 12/24/2013): **4400**

AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)

AFIS Cold Hits: **148**

- AFIS Latent Prints Searched: **506**

NSP Laboratory Turnaround Times: A Brief Explanation!

The Backlog Corner lists the current case assignments for each analytical section in the laboratory plus the current section turnaround times. The number of current case assignments is self-explanatory and easy to understand - turnaround times, on the other hand, are dynamic and can be dependent on different factors. For example, if a piece of evidence (e.g. a firearm) has multiple assignments (latent prints, DNA, and firearms), the firearm section has to wait to work their portion of the case until latent prints and DNA are finished with their analysis first. This makes the turnaround time for the firearm portion of the case longer than if there was only a firearm assignment attached.

The NSP Crime Laboratory turnaround times are simply an estimated time in which routine, **NON-RUSH**, cases are worked. Listed turnaround times do not reflect turnaround times for **RUSH** cases.





NSP Crime Laboratory New Facility/Relocation Plans (2015)

As previously mentioned in the July 2013 issue of *The Lab Report*, the Nebraska State Patrol received the support and funding necessary to relocate the crime laboratory to a larger, more efficiently designed facility! The site selection process for a new NSP Crime Laboratory facility was recently completed in December 2013. After careful evaluation of a number of options, **Lincoln Airpark** was selected as the location for our new facility! The laboratory will be located at the corner of NW 41st Street and Air Park Road.

We are currently starting the exciting design phase with the architectural team! The new laboratory facility will be approximately twice the size of our current building and designed with efficiency, current crime laboratory standards, and future expansion in mind in order to meet growing casework demands. It is our goal to have the new facility constructed and ready for occupancy by **June 2015**.

As we move closer to our relocation date, we will keep our submitting agencies informed with up-to-date facility information as well as provide the exact address/directions regarding how to reach our new location!



RTI International Continuing Education Courses

RTI International's Center for Forensic Sciences Continuing Education Program offers online educational training courses geared specially for law enforcement, forensic and medical professionals, attorneys, and other ancillary professionals. Three types of training courses are available - Basic Training, Premium Training, and Sponsored Training—and can be accessed through the following website: <https://www.forensiced.org/index.cfm>

Basic Training Courses are **FREE** and range from topics in crime scene investigation, forensic analysis, ethics, sexual assault response, expert testimony, SANE/SART/SAFE, death investigation, missing persons investigation, NAS Report, forensic anthropology, and laboratory administrative issues. Upon course completion, students will receive a certificate of attendance. Attendance of some courses also count toward Continuing Education Points (see individual course descriptions for further information as each course will vary in accreditation awards). **Premium Training Courses** have a **FEE** associated with the course.

Basic Training Courses: <https://www.forensiced.org/training/alltraining.cfm>

Premium Training Courses: <https://www.forensiced.org/training/premium.cfm>

Selection of a course through either the Basic, Premium, or Sponsored training tabs will provide you with the following information as well as an online registration option:

- ⇒ Course Title
- ⇒ Course Description
- ⇒ Course Type (live virtual classroom, on demand presentation, etc.)
- ⇒ Section (e.g. expert testimony, forensic sciences, legal, etc.)
- ⇒ Length
- ⇒ Presenter/Co-Presenter(s) (including presenter/co-presenter biographies)
- ⇒ Audience to whom the course is geared
- ⇒ Performance Requirement (e.g. testing, class participation, etc.)
- ⇒ Course Accreditation





RTI International Training Courses for Legal Professionals

Two RTI International educational courses that are geared specifically for legal professionals are:

1) Introduction to the Crime Laboratory - Understanding Its Role and Purpose

- Designed for legal professionals who present and/or scrutinize scientific evidence in courts of law. This course provides information regarding the historical rise of modern crime labs (landmark cases), differentiates between the five types of forensic laboratories commonly in operation in the US, discusses strategies to effectively help prevent case backlogs, and identifies key laboratory management.

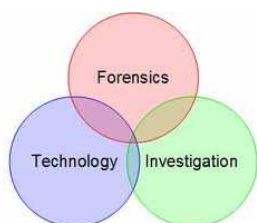
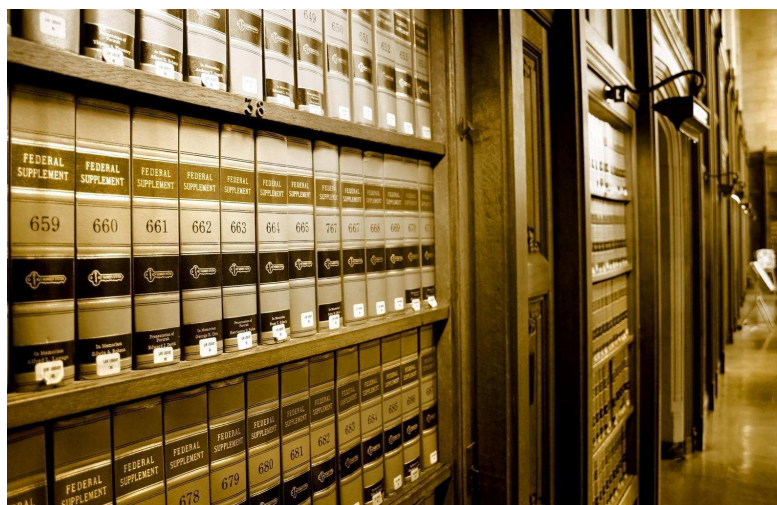
2) Managing Quality and Reliability in the Crime Laboratory: A Lawyer's Perspective

- Designed for legal professionals who interact with scientific experts and/or present scientific evidence in courts of law. Information provided in the course includes discussions on how accredited laboratories control quality standards, ensure the reliability of analytical results, and maintain customer confidence. The course will prepare the student to be able to evaluate the work of a scientific expert, name the two types of analysis, name the international body that governs crime lab accreditation, recognize critical court rulings regarding forensic science, and recognize five warning signs that signal problems in a crime laboratory.

Both training courses can be accessed at any time and cost \$95.00 per course. Training course presenters are John Collins and Beth Kroupa.

The courses described above can be accessed from the following link:

<https://www.forensiced.org/training/premium.cfm>



Hints on Evidence!

When submitting large amounts of evidence for analysis by the crime laboratory, be mindful not to “jam pack” evidence into paper bags/boxes. It can be extremely difficult for analysts to remove the items from the packaging without inadvertently affecting the evidence. This is due to the fact that the majority of evidence packages must be cut open. In addition, it can also be difficult to re-package evidence items in the original packaging after analysis has been performed! Examples of “jam packing” include packaging large items such as bedding, clothing, and drugs tightly in paper bags and boxes as well as “burrito wrapping” evidence tightly in paper such as firearms, baseball bats, and other long objects.

When in doubt, leave enough room within the box, bag, or external packaging to ensure that the package can be opened without potential for harming the evidence contained therein as well as allowing for enough room to repackage the evidence in its original container post-analysis.

If you have any questions/concerns with properly packaging evidence for analysis at the NSP Crime Laboratory, please do not hesitate to contact the Evidence Section or the individual analytical units affected for further information!



Box packed too tightly with items
(photo not case-related)



Tightly packaged firearm - “Burrito Wrapped”
(example of packaging created by *The Lab Report* editor for demonstration purposes)



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