

C.S.I. - L.A.

New Joint City-County Crime Lab for all POALAC Opens in a Few Months

The new City-County Crime Lab will open in early 2007, and serve the crime lab needs of all police agencies in Los Angeles County, as well as doing some work for state and federal agencies.

On January 14, 2005, groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Los Angeles Regional Crime Laboratory ushered in the construction phase of a decade-long, joint project. A consolidation of these two laboratories was first proposed by the Los Angeles City-County Consolidation Commission in 1980. Since then, the overcrowded and outdated conditions at the Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles Police Department crime laboratories have been well documented in Los Angeles County Grand Jury reports. Unfortunately, for many years, limited resources kept new or expanded facilities just a dream. Through the tireless efforts of Scientific Services Bureau personnel and Sheriff Lee Baca's tenacity to obtain financial backing from the State of California, a unique law enforcement partnership took place . . . two distinct police laboratories began working jointly toward a state-of-the-art forensic complex.

Ninety-six million dollars secured from the state will provide a 209,000+ square foot facility built on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles. Major laboratory operations will include firearms, photography, DNA, trace evidence, questioned documents, chemical processing of evidence for latent print comparisons and vehicle examination capabilities. LAPD will also house their blood alcohol testing, toxicology, and narcotics sections in the facility. The new laboratory facility will allow for some growth in the Sheriff's Firearms and DNA sections. In order to plan for expansion in those sections, the Latent Prints, Blood Alcohol Testing, Toxicology and Narcotics sections will remain at other facilities.

This project was enhanced by an educational component. The University will be offering a curriculum for their forensic science students along with an opportunity for real laboratory work experience. The University's California Forensic Science Institute has already obtained funding from public and private sources for the development of in-service training curricula, as well as technology development. The University will be enhanced by classrooms and laboratory space within the facility.

Construction of the facility is moving forward on schedule. The building is 88% toward its expected completion at the end of December 2006. It is anticipated that by April 2007 the distinct forensic disciplines from each department will be moved-in; working side-by-side; sharing laboratory space and instrumentation and, undoubtedly, expertise with the result being expanded knowledge and the possibility for innovative laboratory processes. The dedication ceremony for this one-of-a-kind partnership is slated for May 11, 2007.

(Submitted by LASD - Scientific Services Bureau)