Overview of the Latent Print Backlog Issue

Ed Harris Jr.

Chief of Field Support Services

Authorized and Current Staffing

- One Supervisor

- Six Latent Print Examiners
  - 4 – Authorized for casework
  - 2 – In Training (Anticipated release for casework - April, 2015)
  - Duties include receiving and maintaining all latent print cases that are recovered by the Department, performing comparisons, operating the local, state and federal AFIS systems, testifying in court, performing technical and administrative reviews.

- Two APFIS Technicians
  - 1 – Authorized for Casework
  - 1 – Vacancy (To be posted in February, 2015)
  - Duties include receiving latent prints recovered by APD personnel, evaluating evidence for AFIS suitability, performing AFIS searches, writing reports, testifying in court and other administrative duties.

Staffing History
2010 to Present

- The Section has seen no growth in staff for the past 10 years, while amount of time to complete a case has increased significantly.
- Since 2010 the section has lost 4 experienced senior latent print examiners.
- In 2014 a fifth experienced examiner was promoted to supervisor.
- There have been four latent print examiners, trained to competency, and available for full-time comparison work since late March 2014.
- The disparity in the speed of comparison work between experienced and inexperienced staff if huge.
  - Current staff work approximately 31 cases per month.
  - Past senior staff could work approximately 45 cases per month.
- Two new employees are currently in Latent Print Examiner training. Training takes approximately 1 year.
- The APFIS Technician vacancy is being posted.

Productivity

- The LP Section receives 120 new comparison requests per month.

- Existing staff is averaging 21.94 cases per month
  - 21.94 cases per month X 4 Examiners = 88 cases per month
  - 27 cases per month are administratively closed (duplicate request, no longer needed, no work conducted).
  - Productivity is impacted by the inexperienced staff.
  - This output is possible due to implementation of initiatives such as limited examinations.

- The following new initiatives were implemented at the beginning of 2014 to attempt to address the production:
  - Implemented a new policy to allow greater use of limited examinations, especially in older cases.
  - Suspended inquiries of property crimes in State AFIS.
  - Redesigned the AFIS procedures so as to avoid working AFIS comparison assignments where only the victim was associated.
  - Provided new instructions for those clearing the local AFIS queues in order to speed up the process.
  - Took the job of receiving and evaluating latent print packets from the examiners and assigned it to the APFIS Technicians to free up more time for comparisons.

Backlog Information

Total Number of Latent Assignments Pending	**1,693**
- APFIS Generated (Backlog to February, 2013)	1,143
- Detective Generated (Backlog to November, 2013)	550
Number of Person Crime Assignments	71
Number of Property Crime Assignments	1,622
- Burglary/Theft Related Assignments	1,261
Turnaround Time for Comparison	February 2013
Total Number of APFIS Assignments Pending	1,567
Number of Person Crime Assignments	4
Number of Property Crime Assignments	1,563
- Burglary/Theft Related Assignments	1,488
Turnaround Time for APFIS Search	July 2014

❖ Priority Assignments are person crime and court pending assignments.

❖ At this time most property crime related APFIS generated comparisons are pulled and worked 2-3 months before statute of limitations expires.

Examiner Caseload

- APFIS Generated Assignments   35%
- Detective Generated Assignments   30%
  - Depending on the difficulty and amount of work to be conducted, completing a case from start to finish could take 4 hours for a less complicated case to a month for more involved cases.
- Administrative and Technical Review   25%
  - A technical review entails re-working the case by a second examiner.
  - 20% of cases have to be technically reviewed as per accreditation guidelines.
- APFIS Searches   10%
- Court Testimony   <1%
- Training of New Examiners   <1%
- Administrative Functions

Historical Factors that Created Backlog

- Prior to 2011:
  - There was no working Latent Print Supervisor within the section itself.
  - All but one examiner had the experience to be IAI certified and be considered Senior Examiners.
  - All the examiners came to APD from other agencies, with experience ranging from six years all the way to 35 years. Most were in excess of 20 years of experience in latent print examination. The pay scales have fallen behind other agencies and we are no longer able to recruit experienced staff.
  - All of the examiners were more agreeable to working overtime in order to catch up with the backlog. Current staff are experiencing burnout and family issues that prevent working overtime.
  - The process of hiring was not as involved. Currently it takes 3 – 6 months to hire a staff member.
  - The policies in place requirements were simpler. Due to accreditation requirements, this has necessarily become more involved and time-consuming over time, increasing time to complete a case by 20%.

Remediation of Issue

- With the current staff the section is working as many cases that are received monthly, therefore we are making no progress on the backlog.

- The Section has modified many processes, cut back on services and implemented initiatives with no significant impact on the backlog.