



# Crime Laboratory Division Newsletter

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## Message from the Chief's Office

Greetings from the DPS Crime Laboratory Division!

The purpose of our newsletter is to increase the lines of communication between the laboratory and our customers.

We welcome any feedback on how we can improve our

services. If you have any questions, suggestions, comments, or concerns, please email us or complete our survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TS83H2B>

Thank you,  
Brady Mills, Chief  
Crime Laboratory Division



## Crime Laboratory Division Notices

◆Effective 7/1/22, CLD will stop generating Closed Without Analysis reports on Destruction-Only and Hold/Storage-Only seized drug submissions. Please note that not every lab has been issuing Closed Without Analysis reports. Documentation or proof of submission (e.g. submission form copy with lab sticker) is available, if needed, upon request. Additionally, if a submission does not indicate that analysis is not needed (Destruction-Only or Hold), this can result in the unnecessary analysis of the case, which delays the issuance of reports for other active cases.

◆The Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has approved guidelines

and non-standard kit specifications in case of a reduction in the availability of the standard OAG approved kits from Sirchie and Tri-Tech. Forensic/SANE programs should implement this plan when the standard kits are unavailable. The plan includes DPS providing tracking barcodes and survivor cards for use on nonstandard kits to ensure the kit can still be properly tracked in Track-Kit. This plan is a supplement to the Texas Evidence Collection Protocol and can be found at: [Supplement to Texas Evidence Collection Protocol: Emergency Preparedness Plan \(tamu.edu\)](http://Supplement to Texas Evidence Collection Protocol: Emergency Preparedness Plan (tamu.edu))

◆Please refer to the current Customer Handbook for

case acceptance policies. <https://txdpslabs.qualtraxcloud.com/ShowDocument.aspx?ID=67707>

◆The Statement of Qualifications is no longer published with our analysis reports and can now be found online at <https://www.dps.texas.gov/apps/soq>. The Disclosure Form will continue to be published with the analysis reports. Please note that the reviewer of the DF only reviewed the disclosure form and not the technical records.

◆We are now testing marijuana felony cases. We are not yet accepting THC cases (liquids/oils/edibles) for analysis; method development is in progress.

## Evidence Program Updates

### Submission Forms

Submission forms are changed periodically to due to accreditation requirements and process improvements. Current submission forms are required for all cases and can be located on the DPS Crime Laboratory website on the “Publications” page.

### Submission of Lithium

#### Batteries

All lithium-ion batteries must be removed from items (e.g. e-cigarettes) prior to submission. If the battery cannot be removed, the evidence packaging and submission form are labeled as such so that the Laboratory can treat the item as a flammable hazard and isolate it upon receipt.

### Shipping Evidence to the Lab

When shipping evidence to the crime lab, it is the customer’s responsibility to ensure the chain of custody is documented prior to arrival at the lab. While tracking numbers can be useful to track your evidence shipments in transit, relying solely on the tracking number to establish chain of custody at a later date may be difficult as shipping vendors do not retain shipping records indefinitely. Depending on the shipping vendor selected, tracking information is typically only retained between 90 days to

two years; therefore, it is recommended that the customer maintains all shipment information in their chain of custody record.

### Return Evidence Shipments to the Customer

When evidence is returned to the customer, the laboratory requires the shipping vendor to collect a signature upon delivery. During the height of pandemic, it was common for the delivery drivers to sign “C-19” instead of collecting a signature. While this practice has been ended by our shipping vendor, this may still occur periodically. It is encouraged that customers ensure potential evidence shipments are signed for upon delivery.

### Questions about Evidence Submission and Packaging

If you have questions about the packaging and submission of evidence, the Laboratory Customer Handbook is a resource designed to guide law enforcement in safe and efficient methods of evidence collection, packaging, and submission. The Handbook can be accessed at any time on the website on the “Publications” page as well. If you need additional information, please contact your regional laboratory.

### TECHNICAL SERVICES

5800 Guadalupe St

Austin, TX 78752

Phone: (512) 424-2105

E-mail: [LabQA@dps.texas.gov](mailto:LabQA@dps.texas.gov)

Asst. Laboratory Director: Melissa Valadez

System Quality Manager: Heather Greco

Asst. System Quality Manager: Zoe Smith

Asst. System Quality Manager: Carly Bishop

Toxicology Program: Travis Beckworth

Biology Program: Vanessa Nelson

Comparative Sciences Program : Sandy Parent

Seized Drugs Program: Chance Cline

Evidence Coordination: Chris Fontenot

Digital Multimedia Evidence: Erin Maslon

Laboratory Records Program: Justin Parker

## LIMS Update

We are upgrading our current LIMS software (JusticeTrax) from version 3.7 to version 3.8 on July 1, 2022.

Please limit evidence submissions during that week so that we can address any unforeseen issues that may arise. In addition, as we make the transition, laboratory reports may be delayed for a brief period as we adjust to the new system.

Please be patient with our Evidence Coordination staff after the transition while they become accustomed to the new system.

## Toxicology Program Updates

Effective March 1, 2022, DPS Crime Laboratory locations will no longer accept toxicology blood evidence collection kits purchased from third party vendors. All toxicology blood evidence must be submitted to DPS Crime Laboratory locations in DPS approved toxicology blood evidence collection kits.

DPS approved toxicology blood evidence collection kits can be purchased through one of the following options.

1) DPS General Store (DPS PERSONNEL ONLY)

2) Texas Smart Buy

a. Questions regarding membership or purchasing can be sent via email to: txsmart-

buy@cpa.texas.gov or via phone to 512-463-3034, option 1

b. Toxicology and Blood Alcohol Kit:

<http://www.txsmartbuy.com/product/5641674>

If you have specific questions, contact your local DPS Crime Laboratory location.

## Quality Assurance Updates

The DPS Crime Laboratory operates a Quality Assurance Program with over 20 staff members. The mission of the Quality Assurance Program is to provide support and guidance to the laboratory system using risk-based approaches in order to maintain consistency, compliance, and integrity. The table below outlines the various roles within the program and related responsibilities.

Title	Responsibility
System Quality Manager	Directs the activities of the Quality Assurance Program. Develops goals and objectives for the program consistent with laboratory objectives.
Assistant System Quality Manager	Administers activities of the Quality Assurance Program. Manages Quality Manager and Quality Assurance Specialist staff.
Quality Manager	Manages quality assurance activities for laboratory including proficiency testing, document control, and validation and training review. Investigates technical and quality issues and monitors the effectiveness of quality action items.
Quality Assurance Specialist	Participates in quality assurance related activities such as proficiency test administration, document control, and training record management. Provides assistance to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements.
Compliance Auditor	Responsible for scheduling, coordinating, and facilitating logistics for audit activities. Develops audit scopes, objectives, and criteria and is responsible for oversight of audit teams.

## Comparative Sciences Program Feature: Forensic Document Examination

Document examination, in particular the comparison of handwriting evidence, has been recognized as a specialty in the judicial system since the early 1900s. The practice of forensic document examination has existed within the department since the early 1940s when the crime laboratory was housed at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. Surprisingly, it is not widely known that Forensic Document Examination services are offered through the Crime Laboratory Division, or the capabilities of our discipline.

Forensic Document Examination (formerly Questioned Documents) is housed at the Austin Laboratory and conduct analyses for all 254 counties in the State of Texas. Presently, there are three proficient FDE examiners that have each completed an industry standard two-year training program.

We are more than handwriting experts, and we are definitely not going to tell you what personality can be derived from your handwriting. Our discipline uses scientific methodologies to examine and evaluate evidence in order to determine origin, authenticity and authorship of documents. We routinely testify in court all over the State as expert witnesses.

Our discipline offers an extensive list of examinations including: Paper Batch Match/Reconstruction, Envelope Batch Matching, Examination and Preservation of Charred and Saturated Documents, Typewriting (specifically Carbon Ribbon Evidence), Image Enhancement, Impressions and Indentations (latent writing impressions), Alterations/Obliterations/Erasures Detection and Restoration, Document Authentication, Examination of Writ-

ing Instruments (not ink dating), Examination and Comparison of Handwriting, Identification and Analysis of Conventional and Digital Print Processes and other miscellaneous document examinations (including stamps, seals and sequence determination).

Our services are offered for a wide range of offenses, not just forgery cases. We have seen offenses such as Counterfeiting, Vandalism, Suicide, Questioned Death, Fraud, Tampering with Government Documents, Theft, Harassment/Threatening Correspondence, Sexual Assault and Homicide.

Stop and think before you process any original documents for latent prints or DNA. Consider whether our Forensic Document Examiners may be able to find markings or latent writing impressions on the document that may have additional evidentiary value. Our examinations are non-destructive and allow for all evidence submitted to the FDE discipline to be preserved for other forensic services. However, processing for latent prints first will limit the types of examinations our examiners can provide. If any evidence needs to be modified for examination purposes, we will contact your agency immediately for permission.

Ideally, for any types of examination, known standards would accompany any questioned evidence. However, there may be times when there is not a known suspect for comparison purposes. The questioned evidence can still be examined. There are several examination processes that our discipline can still perform that may produce investigative leads that can assist your agency. We are happy to help answer questions before submission and can walk

you through the process of what evidence needs to be collected or submitted for your specific case.

We also offer various conclusions for our examinations. Some of these conclusions offered are qualified opinions and we do not always provide definitive opinions (i.e. identification or elimination). Several factors and limitations in the evidence can lead to these qualified opinions. For handwriting examinations specifically, we offer seven (7) possible conclusions including: identification, strong probability did write, indications may have written, inconclusive, indications may not have written, strong probability did not write, and elimination. Please note, it is more difficult to eliminate a writer than it is to identify a writer. We will always state on our report what limitations exist that do not allow for a more definite conclusion.

Furthermore, we would be happy to offer more detailed presentations to your agency upon request. We can provide information on the types of examinations we perform, examples of document evidence, types of cases that we work, proper packaging, collection and submission information, and examples of how we can assist your law enforcement agency. Please note, we do not offer training on how to conduct forensic document examinations. You can contact us and we will assist in coordinating this opportunity for your agency (or multiple agencies in your area).

If you have any questions about a particular case, how to submit, or what to submit, please feel free to contact us directly at [DPSForensicDocs@dps.texas.gov](mailto:DPSForensicDocs@dps.texas.gov) or at 512-424-2105.

## Breath Alcohol Laboratory News

### **Intoxilyzer 9000 Operator Schools**

The Office of the Scientific Director (OSD) provides training for law enforcement personnel seeking certification as an Intoxilyzer 9000 operator. Full information may be obtained by visiting the OSD webpage: [www.dps.texas.gov/BalLab](http://www.dps.texas.gov/BalLab). The FAQs tab will contain a schedule of schools which are conducted across the state.

Currently certified Intoxilyzer Operators can get a jump on renewing their certification as an operator by conducting five Practice Tests on any supervised Intoxilyzer 9000.

### **Testing Activity**

BAL testing activity for the 2021 cal-

endar year remains below pre-pandemic levels with 29584 complete subject tests statewide.

### **Court Activity**

As the state begins to recover from the pandemic, 2021 court activity has begun to return to normal levels. BAL Forensic Scientists testified in 59 criminal trials, swore to 5077 affidavits, and prepared over 860 discovery packets for criminal litigation.

### **Expanding Services**

Historically, metropolitan areas provided Technical Supervision (breath alcohol services) through local or regional forensic laboratories. In recent years, some of those

entities have begun to discontinue providing forensic services in various disciplines and breath alcohol is no exception. In the Fall of 2021, Bexar County entered a contract with the BAL to provide breath alcohol services to the county. This agreement included funding to hire an additional forensic scientist to share the workload with existing personnel in Bexar County. On a similar note, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office withdrew support for the Breath Alcohol Test Program in their county. Beginning in February, DPS Crime Laboratory personnel in the area began providing services by assuming responsibility for six evidential instruments and all Tarrant County Intoxilyzer operators.

## Employee News

### **New Hire:**

Macy Milam – Toxicology  
(Breath Alcohol)

### **Promotions:**

Naketia Rogers – FSIV  
Tasha Israel – FSIV  
Janeen Kubilus - FSIV  
Kathleen Sherman- FSIV

### **Regional Director's Award**

Forensic Scientist IV **Camille Stafford**, BAL Conroe, was presented the Regional Director's Excellence in Leadership Award by Regional Director Jason Taylor recognizing her long-term efforts supporting the Southeast Texas Region Citizens Police Academy, assistance to the Operational Medicine Unit as a Regional COVID screener, and her

video editing work related to DPS projects. The first project being a series of instructional videos filmed in the BAL electronics repair laboratory detailing Intoxilyzer maintenance techniques, and a video production submitted to the Virtual Katy Area Safety Fest 2020 highlighting the services offered by the Texas Highway Patrol.

### **BREATH ALCOHOL LABORATORY**

5800 Guadalupe St., Bldg U

Austin, TX 78752

Phone: (512) 424-2405

E-mail: [OSD@dps.texas.gov](mailto:OSD@dps.texas.gov)

Scientific Director: **Travis Beckworth**

Quality Manager: **Jennifer Howard**

## BAL Records Public Access

The production of BAL records such as instrument maintenance, analytical reports, and operator credentialing are routinely included in discovery requests related to criminal

litigation. The BAL has a public facing website [here](#) contains records generated in normal BAL activities. These records are available free of charge to the public.



## Abilene Laboratory News

The Seized Drug Section has made great improvements in turnaround-times over the past year. In 2020, the average case age has

decreased by approximately 29 days, and cases completed in 30 days has increased by over 57%.

### Section Spotlight: Evidence Coordination

The Evidence Coordination Section always does a great job of organizing and making room in the vaults. In the past year, they have destroyed over 3600 pounds of seized drugs! However, the Abilene Laboratory continues to struggle with limited vault space. For DPS agencies, your assistance in the submission of destruction forms would be greatly appreciated. For all agencies,

submitting items in the appropriate size containers would assist us in maintaining the space needed to store all the evidence. To help us with this, please use 6x9 or 9x12 envelopes if possible, but nothing smaller than 6x9 size envelopes. If evidence is to be placed in a box, please use the appropriate box size. Too much empty space inside a box can cause it to open

during shipment and intensifies the laboratory space issue.

Requests sent via email should be sent to [Abilene.CrimeLaboratory@dps.texas.gov](mailto:Abilene.CrimeLaboratory@dps.texas.gov).

This email is continuously monitored during working hours, and ensures that requests are handled in a timely manner.

### Employee Spotlight

Danielle Weems has been with the Abilene Crime Laboratory since 12/2020. She became an independent Forensic Scientist in 12/2021. Thank you to her trainer,

Sarah McGregor and mentor, Herman Carrel, and all the others who have helped along the way, for all their work in getting her to the next step of her career. Con-

gratulations Danielle and the Seized Drugs Section! We now have 6 fully trained Forensic Analysts at the Abilene Crime Laboratory!

#### ABILENE LABORATORY

2720 Industrial Blvd

Abilene, TX 79605

Phone: (325) 795-4040

E-mail: [AbileneCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:AbileneCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Mary Avalos Belli

Quality Manager: Kevin Condel

## Amarillo Laboratory News

The Amarillo lab is expecting a remodel in the near future. There is currently not a set date; however, we are looking for ways to continue receiving and processing cases and providing our law enforcement partners with forensic services during the remodel.

### Quarterly Backlog and Turn-Around-Time

The Amarillo location is completing cases within two weeks of receiving them and is currently assisting the Austin and Midland locations with their casework.

As of December 31, 2021, we have 648 THC cases that are pending analysis. The Division is currently in the development phase of a method for analysis.

## Employee News

### Laboratory Staff

The Amarillo team currently consists of a regional laboratory manager, three evidence technicians, five forensic scientists, and one breath alcohol technical supervisor.

### PROMOTIONS

**Ross Havens:** Forensic Scientist IV – Sept 2021

**Waldon Chen:** Forensic Scientist III – July 2021

**Dzung Nguyen:** Forensic Scientist II – Sept 2021

### AMARILLO LABORATORY

4200 Canyon Drive

Amarillo, TX 79109

Phone: (806) 468-1431

E-mail:

AmarilloCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov

Laboratory Manager: Brandon Conrad

Quality Manager: Kevin Condel

## Community Outreach

Counties we service: Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, Wheeler

The Amarillo Crime Laboratory has provided presentations on evidence submission in the past.

Please contact us if you are interested in a presentation.

If there is any way we can assist you, please let us know!

### Laboratory Hours

Monday-Friday

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Closed for lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Evidence coordination stops receiving new evidence at 4:00 PM

# Austin Laboratory

## Section Spotlight: Trace Evidence

### Gunshot Primer Residue Information

The strength of gunshot primer residue (pGSR) analysis is to associate people, places, or objects with the discharge of a firearm that have not already otherwise been associated. If someone has already been associated with a firearm (i.e., arrested with a firearm or states they handled a firearm) or with the discharge of a firearm (i.e., victim of a gunshot wound), pGSR analysis will have limited value.

Shooting crimes have increased substantially during current times. As a result, the Texas DPS Crime Laboratory has seen a significant increase in pGSR case requests. The influx in requests for this type of analysis has led to a delay in completion of cases. To better accommodate and serve our customers, we request that the following information be provided by the customer at the time of submission.

A fully completed GSR Information Form attached to the submission form (see photo). At a minimum, we need the following information prior to starting analysis:

- Did the individual sustain a gunshot wound?
- Date/time of the incident?
- Date/time GSR kit was collected?
- If hands were bagged, date/time of bagging?

Please note omitting any of the above-listed information will result in delays to the analysis and hinders the efficiency of the overall process. Missing information requires laboratory staff to contact the customer to obtain the necessary information before analysis can begin. This delay can be mitigated with our customers' help by

ensuring GSR Information Form contains the necessary information prior to submission of the GSR kit.

For ease of access, we prefer that the GSR Information Form be included with the Laboratory Submission Form rather than inside the GSR kit.

To address this large influx of cases, the Laboratory will be prioritizing cases based on offense type and will only analyze pGSR evidence in crimes against persons at this time.

Below is an example of a GSR kit information form; the necessary fields are circled in red.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
CRIME LABORATORY

### Gunshot Residue (GSR) Kit Information Form

LAB-211 Rev. 04/16 (page 1 of 1) Issued by: SCLM

Complete all information requested and submit white copy with a LAB-201, return yellow copy to kit, and retain pink copy.

Collecting Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense:  Homicide  Suicide  Assault  Drive-by  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual (S = Suspect, V = Victim) Information**

S / V	Name (Last, First, Middle, Suffix)	DOB
_____	_____	_____

Subject is:  Right-handed  Left-handed  Unknown

Was subject shot?  YES  NO

Any debris and/or suspected blood on subject's hands?  YES  NO

Has subject washed their hands since shooting?  YES  NO  Unknown

Was the subject in possession of a firearm when detained?  YES  NO

Subject's Occupation (if known): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subject's Hobbies (if known): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Brief description of subject's activity between the time of the shooting and the time of the GSR collection:  
 \_\_\_\_\_


**Shooting Incident Information**

Date and time shooting occurred: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM

Date and time of evidence collection: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM

Shooting location (e.g., kitchen, parking lot, indoors, outdoors): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of firearm used: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Firearm caliber: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ammunition manufacturer\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ammunition caliber: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of shots fired: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note: If ammunition manufacturer is unknown, draw head stamp here:  
  
 Base of Cartridge

Collecting Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

White Copy - Submit with LAB-201      Yellow Copy - Place Inside GSR Kit      Pink Copy - Retain



## Section Spotlight: Digital/Multimedia

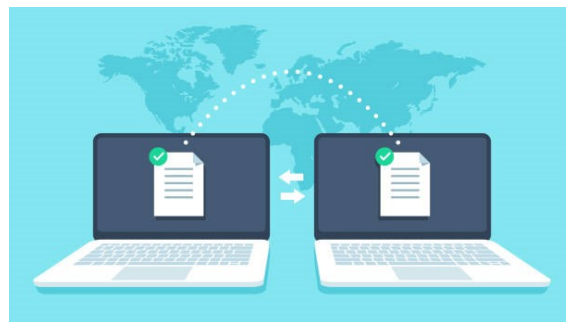
Data dumps can now be provided to customers if requested on the Digital/Multimedia Information Form (LAB-210). A data dump is a copy of all accessible data on the device provided to the agency in a portable case format.

Please note that if a data dump is requested, no analysis will be performed by the Digital/Multimedia section. If analysis is requested later, a new submission form must be submitted. Turn-around time for data dump requests is ex-

pected to be shorter than cases pending full analysis.

It is possible that evidence from a data dump may not be located or identified unless examined by a trained and qualified examiner; If relevant information is not located when viewing the data dump, please request a forensic examination of the evidence.

Due to the large amount of data



that may be dumped from a computer/mobile device, it may be necessary to submit blank media on which to copy the data. A USB device 64GB or more is recommended.

## Employee Milestones

### NEW HIRES

**Darren Bailey** – Forensic Scientist, Seized Drugs

**SueAnn Davenport** – Administrative Supervisor

**Sydney Rios** – Forensic Scientist, Trace Evidence

**Michelle Hoffman** – Supervisor, DNA

**Stacy Cameron** – Administrative Assistant IV

**Christian LaChance** – Forensic Scientist, DNA

**Yvette Ruiz** – Evidence Tech, Evidence Coordination Section

**Gina Rush** – Forensic Scientist, Digital Media

**Elinor Hehir** – Forensic Scientist, Digital Media

**Kathy Garcia** – Evidence Tech, Evidence Coordination Section

**Carol Retamozo** – Supervisor, DNA

**Ruby Tapia** – Laboratory Technician, Toxicology

**Dianna Monroe** – Laboratory Technician, Seized Drugs

### PROMOTIONS

**Ryan Christopher** – Forensic Scientist to Firearms/Toolmarks Supervisor

**Rachel Aubel** – Forensic Scientist to Seized Drugs Supervisor

**Christopher Singletary** – Laboratory Technician to Forensic Scientist, Seized Drugs

**Rusty White** – Forensic Scientist to Team Lead, Trace Evidence

**Kiersten Coffin** – Forensic Scientist to Team Lead, Trace Analysis

**Kelsey King** – Laboratory Technician to Forensic Scientist, DNA

**Jessica Mory** – Laboratory Technician to Forensic Scientist, DNA

**Liz Hosage** – Laboratory Technician to Forensic Scientist, DNA

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Juan Rojas** – Trace Evidence – 40 yrs

**Christopher Youngkin** – Seized Drugs – 25 yrs

**Bonnie Manno** – Friction Ridge – 20 yrs

**Bryan Strong** – Friction Ridge – 20 yrs

**Erin Maslon** – Digital Media – 15 yrs

**Oscar Cazares** – Seized Drugs – 5 yrs

**Mike Dayton** – Toxicology – 5 yrs

**Gabriella Cansino-Jones** – DNA – 5 yrs

**Itzel Chavarria** – DNA – 5 yrs

**Luis Zertuche** – Evidence Coordination – 5 yrs

**Stephanie Pigott** – ECS – 5 yrs

**Caitlyn Tauriello** – Digital Media – 5 yrs

**Traig Deal** – Digital Media – 5 yrs

**Angela Roe** – Forensic Document Examination – 5 yrs

### RETIREMENTS

**Hank Amen** – Seized Drugs – 6/30/21

**Juan Rojas** – Trace Evidence – 4/30/22

### AUSTIN LABORATORY

5800 Guadalupe St Bldg U

Austin, TX 78752

Phone: (512) 424-2405

E-mail: [AustinCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:AustinCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Haley Yaklin

Quality Manager: Michelle Melo

## Capitol Area Laboratory News

The Capitol Area DPS Laboratory has served the Austin PD in providing DNA analysis and CODIS entry for the last 5 years and a new MOU has been approved to continue providing DNA services to APD for the next 3-5 years. Over the last few years, training of CAP analysts has been the primary focus of the Capitol Area Lab, along with the completion of several other case related projects. As of 2022, all of our 11 personnel are trained in the DNA analytical process, 9 are trained in DNA interpretation, and 8 are

trained in Forensic Biology! We have also completed the validations of 2 new instruments: QI-Asymphony, a sleek extraction instrument that can purify up to 96 samples at a time, in batches of 24 , and the QIAgility, a compact benchtop instrument that enables automated quantification and PCR set up. All analysts within the Capitol Lab have been trained to use these new instruments and have been utilizing them in casework over the last few months. Since Capitol Area has started receiving active casework at the Capitol Ar-

ea Lab in October 2021, the turn-around time for DNA cases has decreased from an average of 92 days for 2021 to an average of 41 days for 2022. From 01/01/2022 to now, over 2/3 of the cases have had a Forensic Biology report issued within 30 days. Capitol Area has also completed several rush cases that are a threat to public safety within a 7 -14 day turn-around time and the lab continues to be used as a resource to complete Austin PD rush cases that meet the specific criteria of this distinction.

## Community Outreach

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Capitol Area Lab was unable to host a 2021 Open House to allow for tours of our lab areas, but we will be scheduling a future Open House in tandem with the Austin PD Forensics Unit! If your agency has a particular training need, please contact Samantha Perkins, the DNA Supervisor/Technical Leader.

**CAPITOL AREA LABORATORY**  
 812 Springdale Road  
 Austin, TX 78702  
 Phone: (512) 424-7873  
 E-mail: [CapitolCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:CapitolCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)  
 Laboratory Manager: **Melissa Valadez**  
 Quality Manager: **Michelle Melo**

## Employee Spotlight

**Alexandra Keenan** is the DNA laboratory technician for the Capitol Area lab. She is from Poughkeepsie, NY and received her BS in Forensic Science from St. Edward's University here in Austin Texas. She remained in Austin in hopes of working for the Department of Public Safety crime lab. She began her career with DPS in

2019 and has been an asset to the team ever since. She has recently received her work authorization in the analytical DNA process. In addition to her passion for forensics, she loves scuba diving. She is currently training to become a SSI dive instructor. She loves to encounter sharks and different species of aquatic life.



Lexi's trip to Cozumel where she received her advanced open water certification.

# CODIS Laboratory News

Featured Familial Search Program Investigative Leads:

Successful Familial Search provided investigative information to Denver Police Department that solved 4 cold case homicides. You can read the story at [Denver PD Familial Search 2021](#)

Featured Hit Confirmation Investigative Leads:

[Austin August 2021 Sexual Assault](#)

[Houston 2017 Homicide](#)

[Houston 2021 ATM Robbery/Homicide](#)

Turnaround time for processing CODIS samples and uploading DNA profiles is 35 day average, 20 day median.

Average Turnaround time for Hit Confirmations is 5 days, the median is 4 days.

Year	Number of Hits	Number of Submissions Processed/Uploaded
2021	2,868	42,278 Buccal: 31,299 Blood: 10,979
2022	1,565 as of 6/23/22	18,147 as of 6/23/22 Buccal: 14,515 Blood: 3,632

## Employee News

### NEW HIRES

- Valeria F.**—CODIS Technician
- Keondria P.**—CODIS Technician
- Ryan L.**—CODIS Technician

### PROMOTIONS

- Mounir M.**—Forensic Scientist IV
- Rebecca S.**—Alt. State CODIS Administrator

### EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

- Lisa S.**—Retirement after 21+ years with DPS CLD
- Caryne H.**—Master’s Degree
- Charles S.**—10-year DPS service award

### INDEPENDENT WORK AUTHORIZATION

- Blake J., Devin M., Valeria F., Keondria P., Ryan L., Caryne H.**

### CODIS LABORATORY

5800 Guadalupe St, Bldg U  
 Austin, TX 78752  
 Phone: (512) 424-2790  
 E-mail: [codislab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:codislab@dps.texas.gov)  
 Program Manager: Gary Molina

## Community Outreach

### SUBMISSION REMINDERS

Most common rejections for sample submissions:

- ♦ Bad quality fingerprints on the data card
- ♦ Blank swab envelope or blood tube
- ♦ Missing fingerprints
- ♦ Sample not collected with a

CODIS collection kit

- ♦ SID field populated with number other than official SID; leave SID field blank if no SID is available

### PRESENTATIONS

**Ryan S.**—Volunteer Judge at local Science Fair and a volunteer at NamUs Missing in Harris County Day.

**Blake J.**—Presentation to Alamo Heights H.S.

**Jennifer P.**—National Association of Forensic Laboratory Counsel conference; Beaumont SAKI conference in 2022

CODIS Liaisons attended and presented at the Beaumont SAKI conference in 2021.

# Corpus Christi Laboratory News

The Corpus Christi Crime Lab has a new address! The building has not moved but our mailing address is now 5001 Prescott St. Corpus Christi, TX 78416. Please make any changes necessary to utilize this new address.

## Employee Spotlight

Lucas Risner is a new hire who moved from San Antonio, Texas to Corpus Christi to continue school.

He graduated with a B.S in Chemistry from Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi.

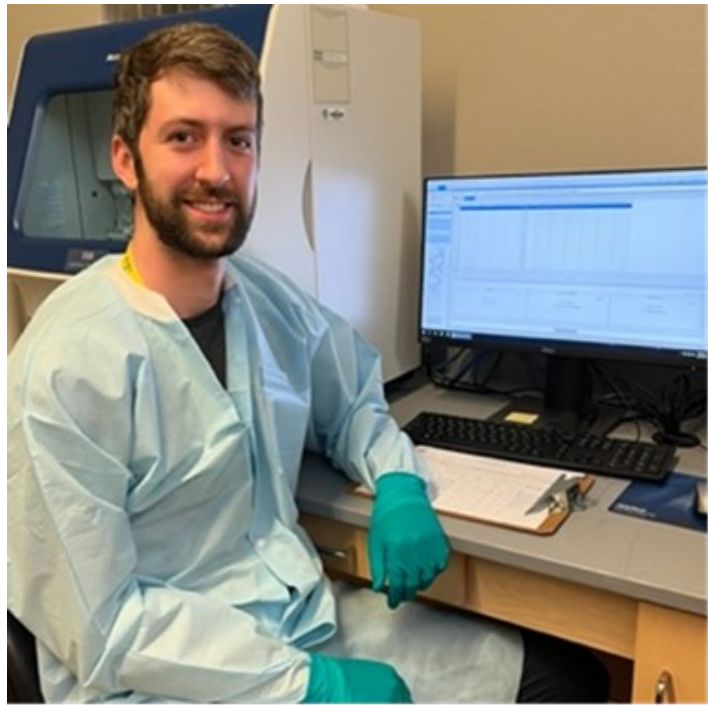
He is excited to be able to serve as one of the DNA Technicians.

Lucas is very excited to start his career with the Texas DPS and to be part of a great team!

**CORPUS CHRISTI LABORATORY**

5001 Prescott Street  
 Corpus Christi, TX 78416  
 Phone: (361) 698-5641  
 E-mail: [CorpusChristiCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:CorpusChristiCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Brian Nacu  
 Quality Manager: Catalina Cuervo



Lucas Risner

## Section News

### DNA Section

All requests for expedited analysis for DNA cases need to be submitted via a LAB-213 for consideration. Sexual Assault kits submitted with

offense dates past 9/1/19 do not need a LAB-213. DNA cases must be submitted with victim knowns and a case scenario or offense report. Suspect knowns are

also preferred to be submitted with the original submission but are not required.

### Seized Drugs Section

Seized Drugs is turning around cases within 60 days.



# El Paso Laboratory News

In El Paso, we stayed the course during the pandemic and continue to plug away at the backlog while serving the citizens of West Texas.

Our laboratory is almost back at full capacity, interviews were held to fill vacant positions for an Evidence Techni-



cian and DNA analyst.

Please help us welcome Angelica Robinson to the Evidence Section and Daisy Saucedo to

the DNA Section. They are both ready to start training and contribute to the El Paso Team.

## Section Spotlights

### SEIZED DRUG SECTION

**Monica Alonzo** is a Forensic Scientist III and has worked in the Evidence Section, Blood Alcohol Section and is now currently in the Seized Drug Section. She started her employment in 2013.

**Vanessa Ponce** is a Forensic Scientist III and has been employed with DPS since February of 2017. She was originally stationed in the Laredo Crime Lab

but is happy to be stationed back home in El Paso where she was born and raised.

**Ruben Pinon** is our newest hire in this section and is a Forensic Scientist II. He has been with DPS for almost 2 years. We are looking forward to having all four fully trained analysts on board to work cases.

### DNA SECTION

The goal of the DNA section is to

increase the DISC enabled profiles. Law Enforcement Agencies that have SA, Homicide, Kidnapping, and Terrorism Cases will be receiving an email to fill out a LAB-214. This would allow our section to enter profiles to be searched at the booking stations. If the agency knows in advance there is an unknown assailant, then this form can accompany the evidence during submission.

## Employee News

### ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED

**Christine Cenicerros**, Forensic Scientist VI, celebrated her 24th anniversary with DPS in January.

**Jessica Gonzales-Pena**, Fo-

rensic Scientist II, celebrated her 4th anniversary in January as well.

**Cathey L. Serrano**, Forensic Scientist IV, celebrated her anniversary in February with 14 years.

### EL PASO LABORATORY

11612 Scott Simpson Drive

El Paso, TX 79936

Phone: (915) 849-4113

E-mail: [ElPasoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:ElPasoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Joseph Correa

Quality Manager: Angel Rios



## Garland Laboratory News

The Garland location continues to make significant progress in case work. The Evidence Coordination Unit handled over 20,000 cases in 2021. The Seized Drugs and Toxicology/Alcohol sections consistently complete cases in 30 days. Trace Evidence hired a third Fo-

rensic Scientist, balancing casework and training. The Friction Ridge and Firearms Sections coordinated with the other locations to help complete cases across the state. And DNA continues to complete sexual assault cases well within the 90 day timeframe.

## Employee News

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Alexis Reaves  
Sarah Edwards  
Drake Duncan  
Abigail Coats  
Morgan Anderson  
Yolanda Contreras

### FORENSIC SCIENTIST IV PROMOTIONS

Amanda Burns  
David Eckre  
Renea Eckelkamp  
Hannah Sigal

## Section Spotlight—Local CODIS Database

In addition to searching casework DNA profiles against the state and national databases, profiles are also searched against other casework profiles entered by that laboratory. This is especially beneficial in instances when a DNA profile has enough usable data for comparison directly to a known sample but does not have enough data for entry and searching against offenders or other casework samples at the state (SDIS) or national (NDIS) level. Local DNA database searches are another tool we use to aid in your investigations, especially when there is no suspect. Since these partial profiles are not eligible for

searching above the local level, sometimes this is the only chance for an investigative lead to be developed.

We are very excited about recent efforts at the Garland Laboratory to complete property crimes cases has led to an increase in the number of DNA profiles being searched at the local laboratory level. This has resulted in the development of database matches (investigative leads) between local-only DNA profiles to casework DNA profiles that were previously solved with CODIS hits. Not surprisingly, in both sets of local matches we have had, the proper-

### EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

#### Quality Manager Uyen Henson

The QM implements the quality system at the Garland location by monitoring laboratory practices to verify compliance with policies and procedures. Uyen worked in the DNA sections of the DPS Houston and Garland locations from 2002 to 2013. She promoted to QA Specialist in 2013, then to Quality Manager in October 2020.

ty crime cases matching to each other were submitted by the same police department.

CODIS matches will require law enforcement investigation and submission of known samples from any suspects to our laboratory for direct comparison to the DNA profiles developed. The best way to assist us in getting the most out of your cases is to submit requested known samples, whether that be from suspects, victims, eliminations, and/or consensual partners. Sometimes the knowns you submit from non-suspects can be used to help us develop a better entry profile for CODIS.

#### GARLAND LABORATORY

402 West IH 30

Garland, TX 75043

Phone: (214) 861-2190

E-mail: [GarlandCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:GarlandCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: James Nichols

Quality Manager: Uyen Henson

## Houston Laboratory News

### TURN-AROUND TIMES

Average age of an unreleased case

Biology: 48 days

Blood Alcohol: 13 days

DNA: 28 days

Firearms: 150 days

Seized Drugs: 107 days

Trace: 96 days



## Employee News

### NEW EMPLOYEES

**Tomas Vasquez** is a Sam Houston State University Alumni with a double major in Criminal Justice and Political Science. Tomas joined our Evidence Receiving team in February and is excited to be working for the DPS Crime Lab in his hometown of Houston.

**John Beltran** started with our Evidence Receiving Team in September of 2021.

**Irene Chiang** received her Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science in Taiwan and a Master of Forensic Science from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She started her career at DPS in Corpus Christi as

a DNA technician and is excited to join the DPS Houston Lab as an analyst.

**Saravith (David) Vonne** started with our Evidence Receiving team in November of 2021.

## Notices

Starting March 1st, 2022 every blood kit submission will have to be submitted in a DPS Blood kit. We will no longer be accepting other kits. Please contact our Evidence Receiving team if you have questions.

Trace Evidence Collection App, published by RTI, is now available for free on Apple iOS and Google Android devices! This helpful app

provides all our customers and stakeholders an easy-to-use reference for recognition, collection, and preservation of trace evidence. We highly encourage our customers and stakeholders to download this informational reference guide so they can always have on hand how trace evidence can provide meaningful information to their investigations.

### HOUSTON LABORATORY

12230 West Road, Building C

Houston, TX 77065

Phone: (281) 517-1380

E-mail: [HoustonCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:HoustonCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Andrew Gardiner

Quality Manager: Somiyeh Zalekian

## Laredo Laboratory News

The Laredo Crime Laboratory is open to receive evidence between the hours of 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The laboratory closes down for lunch from 12:00 pm-1:00 pm. Typically, evidence submissions are received via drop box, mailing services, and in-person. Please remember, to ensure prompt service and to coordinate evidence returns, please schedule an appointment ahead of time when planning to make a visit to our laboratory. We are available to help you package your evidence and can assist in the ship-

ment of your evidence to the appropriate Texas DPS laboratory depending on the examination request(s). A kiosk is also available in our lobby to further assist with completion and printing of submission forms. Services offered by the Laredo Crime Laboratory include: Biology/DNA, Firearms, and Seized Drug analysis.

A complete and legible submission form must accompany all evidence submissions. Because the submission form serves as a contract between your agency and

DPS laboratories in which you are formally requesting analysis of evidence, we require the most current submission form when using our service and all are available on our public DPS website (<https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-laboratory-service/publications>), or on DPSnet for internal customers. The lab will no longer be accepting LAB-06 forms. Also available is the Laboratory Customer Handbook which is an invaluable resource and provides acceptance policies for all services provided by the laboratory.

## Section Spotlight: Evidence Section

The Laredo Evidence Section consists of:

Linda Dimas  
Roxanne Castillo  
Jody Maxwell

The evidence receiving team received a total of 2,470 cases

from July to December 2021. This marks a 35% increase of cases being submitted compared to 2020. The Laredo evidence section also helped in the receiving and forwarding of 113 cases to the appropriate

DPS laboratory for analysis. Our evidence receiving staff strives to provide the best customer service possible and are always willing to assist with any questions you may have about our submission policies.

## Community Outreach

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Laredo Crime Lab was unable to host a 2021 Open House, but we will be scheduling one for 2022! We will be sending emails with the date for our Open House this fall to all our submitting agencies.

Our laboratory would also like to

start with our in-person outreach for our agencies. We can provide informative presentations focused on evidence submission policies as well as discipline specific FAQs. Please email or call our laboratory to schedule a presentation and/or training for your agency.

### LAREDO LABORATORY

1901 Bob Bullock Loop

Laredo, TX 78043

Phone: (956) 728-2245

E-mail: [LaredoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:LaredoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Natalia Sanchez

Quality Manager: Catalina Cuervo

## Lubbock Laboratory News

The Lubbock Crime Laboratory has made a couple of small changes to serve our customers more effectively. We have changed our submission hours from 8 am - 4:30 pm to 8 am – 4 pm. This allows for our staff complete the daily submissions within normal work hours. We encourage all our cus-

tomers to make appointments early in the day if they have large amounts of evidence to submit. We have also started limiting access to the lab's afterhours drop box. The drop box will be limited to internal DPS personnel only. These changes took effect 1/31/2022. If you have any questions, please reach out to us.

## Employee Spotlights

### NEW LAB MANAGER

I want to introduce myself; my name is **Drew Fout**. I am the new lab manger here in Lubbock. Although I'm new to Lubbock, I've been with the DPS crime lab for just under 22 years. I worked as a seized drugs analyst at the Garland laboratory for 12 years and served as the seized drugs section supervisor in Austin for 9 years. I am now very blessed to be working with the fantastic team here in Lubbock. I look forward to serving the state of Texas and the local community with them.

### NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Congratulations to **Les McDaniel** for completing his training and making it to supervised casework. While Les is not new to the Lubbock laboratory, he has completed a major milestone by completing his firearms training.

The laboratory has also hired additional staff this year. We are adding an additional analyst to our seized drugs team and a technician for our blood alcohol team.

## Community Outreach

The Lubbock Laboratory provided training and outreach to several of our customers this year including Texas Ranger Training, Advanced Ranger Training, local law enforcement including Amarillo PD and Abilene PD. Additionally, the lab provided instruction at Lub-

bock Christian University, Texas Tech University, South Plains College, and guidance for a new forensic science program at Lubbock Christian University

If your agency has a particular training need, please contact the laboratory manager.

### LUBBOCK LABORATORY

1404 Lubbock Business Park Blvd ,  
Suite 200

Lubbock, TX 79403

Phone: (806) 740-8900

E-mail: LubbockCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov

Laboratory Manager: Drew Fout

Quality Manager: Kevin Condel

## Section Spotlights

Our Blood Alcohol team is getting cases out the door in 30 days or less.

The Biology/DNA section is processing sexual assault kits in 90 days.

Both teams are continuing to maintain these turnaround times while working cases from around the state.

The Seized Drugs, DNA, and Blood Alcohol teams have been effectively reducing their backlogs.

The friction ridge and firearms teams continue to maintain their backlogs and get cases completed.

## Midland Laboratory News

During the past few years, the Midland location has added new employees and has outgrown its space. Starting in December 2021, the laboratory began its major remodel. With this remodel also comes a renovation of the entire Midland DPS Building. Currently the front desk is under construction and the front door must remain locked. Please ring the

doorbell at the front entrance or call the front desk, 432-498-2100, to assist with entry into the building. The remodel is scheduled for completion at the end of September 2022.

Due to a recent staffing shortage, the laboratory hours are currently 8:00 am – 2:00 pm for evidence receiving. We hope to be back to full time hours in

the next few months. The laboratory thanks you for your patience during this time.

Despite renovations and staffing shortage, the laboratory is still available daily to assist with questions, packaging, or any other concerns that may arise. Please give us a call at (432) 498-2193 or stop by for assistance.

## Section Highlights

### Seized Drugs Section: Backlog Assistance

To reduce our Seized Drugs Backlog, cases are being sent to other DPS locations, as well as NMS Labs. Additionally, the Midland location continues to receive assistance from several District Attorneys' Offices with closing cases that no longer need analysis. Thank you!

## Employee News

### NEW EMPLOYEES

The Evidence Receiving team has two new faces, Christina and Miranda .

**Christina Cervantez** was born and raised in Odessa, Texas.

### Evidence Coordination: Evidence Destruction

Over the past few months, the Midland location has been working hard with evidence destruction preparation. This would give Midland more storage space in the evidence vault. We have a destruction scheduled for the end of February with ~1500 items to be de-

stroyed. Midland is grateful and appreciates all the hard work completed by Texas Highway Patrol and Criminal Investigations Division to make this happen.

She has 19 years of experience in evidence receiving/handling.

**Miranda Ward** was also born and raised in Odessa, Tx and comes to us with a background

in the medical field.

Both individuals are very familiar with our area and started February 15th.

### MIDLAND LABORATORY

2405 South Loop 250 West

Midland, TX 79703

Phone: (432) 498-2190

E-mail: [MidlandCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:MidlandCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Marissa Gomez

Quality Manager: Angel Rios



## Tyler Laboratory News

### Building Update

The Tyler Laboratory’s remodel is completed. Our evidence receiving team has increased capacity to four stations for returning and receiving evidence. Firearms has moved into its new work area after

spending several months in a temporary location within the building during the remodel. The new DNA Section has moved into its space and begin working towards obtaining accreditation and then providing forensic testing in this discipline.

## Section Updates

### Seized Drugs

Seized Drugs worked eliminated their backlog during 2021 and is completing cases from our service areas within 30 days of submission and is working cases for other portions of the state.

### FTM

After working from a temporary location beginning in May 2021 due to remodeling, FTM is back to work in its new permanent workspace. We appreciate the support of the El Paso and Laredo Laboratories in helping us work through some of our older cases!

### DNA

Tyler has hired a DNA Section Supervisor and 3 Forensic Scientists for its new DNA Section. They are currently working through procuring equipment and reagents, validations and

training in preparation for accreditation later this year. Look for more specific information for opening dates and service area in the next Newsletter or separate updates.

### Blood Alcohol

Consistently completed cases within 30 days of submission throughout 2021.

### Evidence Receiving

Please call to schedule appointments for submitting or picking up evidence. Appointments are available from 9am to 4pm Monday through Friday. Evidence receiving is closed from 11:30 to 12:30 each day. The great work being done by our forensic disciplines means an increased workload for the Evidence Receiving team. They are doing a great job stepping up to ensure that their increased workload is being handled.

### TYLER LABORATORY

4700 University Blvd

Tyler, TX 75707

Phone: (903) 939-6021

E-mail: TylerCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov

Laboratory Manager: R. Greg Hilbig

Quality Manager: Emily Hershberger

## Employee News

### NEW HIRES

**Wendy Blackmon** – Evidence Technician (10/1/21)

**Gema Guerra** – Forensic Scientist DNA Section (1/1/22)

**Chris Powell** – Seized Drugs Technician (3/1/22)

### PROMOTIONS

**Danna Morris** – DNA Technician to Forensic Scientist DNA Section (1/25/22)

**Alex Munoz** – Seized Drug Technician to Forensic Scientist DNA Section (1/24/22)

**Agatha Eason** – DNA Forensic Scientist (El Paso Lab) to DNA Section Supervisor (10/1/21)

## Waco Laboratory News

### Seized Drugs

The Waco Crime Laboratory Seized Drug section currently has a supervisor and three forensic scientists. There are two openings for seized drug chemists. As of February 14, 2022, the turnaround time for cases in the seized drug section is approximately 85 days.

### DNA

DNA does not have a backlog. Average turnaround time for

screening is 12 days

Average turnaround time for cases with DNA analysis is 50 days

100% of HB8 cases are released within 90 days

5 Analysts in DNA Training

### Evidence Receiving

Please use the current submission form listed on the DPS website: [Publications | Department of Public Safety \(texas.gov\)](#)

Main Lab number: 254-759-7180 option 2

Schedule evidence submission and returns to ensure we have the appropriate resources to assist you quickly.

Records Requests: [wacocrimelab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:wacocrimelab@dps.texas.gov)

Use the following link to access our public website: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/Crime-Laboratory>

## Employee Spotlight: Lindsay Ornelas

Lindsay comes to us from Ohio where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Forensic Chemistry from The Ohio University. Lindsay has been with the Waco lab for 7 years.

She married the love of her life, Gabe, in the summer of 2020 changing her name from Gasche to Ornelas. Gabe is the Sous Chef at Pivovar, a Czech hotel, restaura-



rant, brewery and bakery in downtown Waco. She and Gabe have a house full of canine companions. Kota, a 12 year old Great Pyrenees, Zoe, a 6 year old Boxer/shepherd mix, Bella, a 6 year old Great Pyrenees, Maverick, a 3 year old Great Pyrenees mix, Charlee, a 2 year old Great Pyrenees, and Lana, a 4 year old Siberian Husky.

In her spare time, Lindsay enjoys crafting, baking treats for the lab and hanging out with her husband and friends.

## Employee News

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Patricia Rogers**, Forensic Scientist III on 04/01/2021

**Christian Webb**, Forensic Scientist II on 06/01/2021

**Allison Zohn**, Forensic Scientist II on 07/15/2021

**Stephanie Pardo**, Forensic Scientist III on 09/01/2021

**Robert Stanton**, Forensic Scientist II on 01/01/2022

**Amy Powell**, Forensic Scientist III on 05/01/2022

### PROMOTIONS

**James Milam** promoted to Quality Manager on 01/20/2022.

**WACO LABORATORY**  
 1617 East Crest Drive  
 Waco, TX 76705  
 Phone: (254) 759-7180  
 E-mail: [WacoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:WacoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)  
 Laboratory Manager: Starla Copeland  
 Quality Manager: James Milam

## Weslaco Laboratory News

### Services offered:

Blood Alcohol, Biology/DNA, Firearms, Friction Ridge and Seized Drugs

### Total Staff:

1 Lab Manager, 1 Quality Manager, 9 support staff, 21 case-work analysts, 9 trainees

### Counties Served: 30

General overview of case load from June 10, 2021 – Dec 31, 2021

### Approximate New Requests:

5187 requests

### Approximate Released Requests:

1427 Blood alcohol  
250 Biology  
405 DNA  
45 Firearms  
74 Friction Ridge  
1512 Seized Drug  
1099 Non-testing reports  
(closed without analysis or outsourcing reports)

## Section Spotlight: Seized Drugs

Our Seized Drug section consists of 1 Section Supervisor, 1 Team Lead, 5 analysts (2 of which assist with Toxicology- Alcohol), 3 trainees and 1 vacancy. Testing services are provided for law enforcement agencies in Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr and Willacy Counties. During the time-period noted the section received approximately 2993 new cases along with 176 destruction only submissions for a total of 3169 new case submissions. The years of work experience for our

staff ranges from 6 months to 20 years.

The seized drug section utilizes preliminary chemical tests, microscopic analysis and/or instrumental analysis for identification of a variety of controlled substance / dangerous drug.

Currently, the highest submission items in our area are vape pens / cartridges and the section would like to remind officers to make every attempt to remove the batteries from such exhibits. Please

### WESLACO LABORATORY

2525 N. International Blvd

Weslaco, TX 78596

Phone: (956) 565-7250

E-mail: [WeslacoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov](mailto:WeslacoCrimeLab@dps.texas.gov)

Laboratory Manager: Jose Zuniga

Quality Manager: Emerald Nazareno

reach out to our laboratory if you have questions on battery removal before submission or packaging and labeling of these items.

## Community Outreach

As part of our COVID response in 2020-2021 our laboratory initiated a scheduling system for evidence submissions.

Our office is open Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00am – 5:00pm and appointments can be set up by calling

our office number a few days before anticipated drop off date. Although we try and schedule the appointment for the date and time of your preference, they are set up on a first call first serve basis and as such you may have to make an

occasional adjustment to fit time slot availability. Please inform our evidence specialist if you have a situation that requires immediate submission to discuss options available.