



CSI aces pitch services to cops

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By **DARLA MARTIN TUCKER THE BUSINESS PRESS**

Representatives of a new forensic DNA analysis lab offered their services to a gathering of law enforcement leaders Jan. 12.

Blaine Kern, president and forensic scientist for DNA analysis firm **Human Identification Technologies** Inc. in Redlands, offered his company's services to a meeting of the San Bernardino County Police Chiefs and Sheriffs Association at the Carriage House in Redlands.

"We're waiting for feedback at this point," Kern said. "Beginning Feb. 15 we will accept evidence for DNA analysis."

Kern and two partners completed gutting a facility and building the \$3 million, 7,000-square-foot high-security laboratory and offices in August. They have finished tests of laboratory instruments and written quality assurance policies and will file an application in the next couple weeks for accreditation from the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board in Garner, N.C.

Accreditation is not required for the lab to perform DNA analysis of samples from crimes in which police have identified suspects and victims. "On those types of cases, it's a matter of working the samples and going to court and testifying on the findings," Kern said.

However the FBI requires lab accreditation for analyzing samples from crime scenes in which police do not have suspects. In such cases the lab enters sample data into the FBI's Combined DNA Index System database to find a match with other DNA evidence.

Kern and Mehul Anjaria, the firm's vice president and laboratory director and a former sheriff's department forensic scientist, started the lab a year ago. Company partner Rod Landon, a long-time friend of Kern's, serves as vice president of business operations.

The trio aims to sell their DNA analysis expertise to backlogged police labs and attorneys across the nation.

Typically forensic crime labs test DNA, or genetic material in body tissues and fluids, to identify culprits in homicide and rape cases. The Redlands Police Department will seek additional funding for forensic services from the City Council in the spring. The money will pay for DNA analysis at the county sheriff's crime lab and at the Redlands lab, said police Chief Jim Bueermann.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's crime lab is "stellar" but sometimes overwhelmed, Bueermann said.

"When time is of the essence for us and the crime lab is not able to assist us, we will be accessing Blaine's company. His technical people were trained by the sheriff's department so we have faith in them," he said.

Human Identification Technologies has garnered six consulting accounts over the past months to verify lab results for defense attorneys in cases around the country.

The process involves examining case file notes and lab protocols to ensure scientists have followed the designated rules, Kern said.

The lab charges \$1,000 to \$1,500 for each DNA analysis sample. Consulting costs \$250 an hour.

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