

Cold Case Task Force Meeting
November 3, 2023
10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
In Person – and Virtual - Google Meet

Attendees: Assistant Director Kirby Lewis, Tiffany Rayback, April Hrenya-Wood, Carrie Davis, Joe Vasquez, Rich Laber, Dawn Weber, Dave Hayes, Sabrina Villegas, Melissa McGaw, Dan McCasky, Karen Bliss, Shawna Gilbert, Tammy Lee, Tracy Thompson, Deena Ezell, Will Culver, John Kellner, Bernie Sena, Melissa Kraker, Sheriff Steave Reams, Brit Hartman, Michele Kennedy and Audrey Simkins

Introductions

Assistant Director Kirby Lewis welcomed attendees.

CBI Updates -

Cold Case Database –

1400	Homicide
489	Missing Person
87	Unidentified
3	Other
1979	Total

This continues to be a work in progress. We are constantly reviewing and updating the database. Our focus over the last couple of months has been Unidentified Human Remains (UHR) cases. We have compared cases in NCIC/NAMUS/Cold Case Database. This work will continue over the next couple of months, but we hope to have every case in every database soon. Additionally, we have been reviewing the images of the UHR to see if it is possible to conduct facial reconstruction that might provide an image that is more lifelike and might provide a lead regarding the decedent's identity.

In December, we will begin messaging local law enforcement by asking them to review their files and provide those cases that are unsolved where 3 years have passed since the date the crime occurred.

We held our first Judicial District meeting in the 18th Judicial District. In the future, we will spend a bit more time on the topic of Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG). We have been in contact with the 4th and 17th Judicial Districts, and both are interested in meeting with us. We are going to try and schedule a meeting with them next. We also plan to visit the 5th Judicial District soon.

BJA Federal Grants

We received 2 of the federal grants.

Cold Case

\$525,000

Analyst I position – Part Time – ViCAP Entry

Overtime for both the laboratory and investigations personnel

Criteria for case acceptance

Unsolved homicide – with a DNA sample searching in CODIS

Grant fund can be used to pay for the expenses related to FIGG

Goal successful prosecution

Grant period October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2026

SAKI

\$498,374

Analyst I position – Part time – Vi CAP Entry

Overtime for both laboratory and investigations personnel

Criteria for acceptance

Unsolved homicide case with a female victim where there may be a sexual component

Grant fund can be used to pay for the expenses related to FIGG

Goal successful prosecution

Grant period October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2026

We initially submitted a list of cases for each grant. However, we have 6 months to further define the list of cases researching each case to see if an item of evidence is searching in the CODIS database. However, if a case does not have a sample searching in CODIS that case can still be accepted under the grant because the SAKI grant does not require a sample searching in the CODIS database. Each agency will be required to participate in a laboratory pre-submission meeting regarding each case they submit. I will draft a cover letter for each grant to help us keep track.

No money was requested for travel as we were told early on that they were not in favor of large dollar amounts related to travel. We can see how things go and possibly ask for a change request. In the future if we are determined travel is a deterrent to case resolution.

Cold Case Review Team

The Review Team will meet on December 6 to hear a case presented by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

The Review Team will meet again on December 13 and 14 to hear a case presented by the Boulder Police Department.

Cold Case Playing Cards

I have posters for decks 1-4. Please let me know if you would like some to hang in your agency lobbies or Investigations. I have them here in the room for the taking.

Missing Person PSAs

We would like to create a few short PSAs that can be used to help promote some of our missing person events. We would like to do something similar for cold case investigations.

If you are interested in participating in an interview that would be used to create these PSAs, please let me know.

If possible, I would like to have both family members and members of LEA if you are willing. I have a list of questions that will be asked. The entire process shouldn't really take more than about 20 minutes. If possible, I would like to look at the day in early December so that we can use them to promote Colorado Missing Person Day event.

Colorado Missing Person Day

Colorado Missing Person Day has been scheduled for Friday, February 2, 2024. We plan to visit the Senate Chambers as we did last year around 9:00 AM. There will be a designated Senate Committee meeting room that we will all meet in between 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM. There will be a Prayer Vigil on the West Steps of the Capitol following the reading of the Resolution in the Senate. The Prayer Vigil will likely begin about 10:00 AM and will conclude with the reading of the names of all those missing in Colorado on that day. The list will also be posted to our website.

Missing Person Open House/Missing Person Collection Clinics

We held our first Missing Person Open House on Wednesday, November 1. Despite our advertising through social media, press releases and messaging to LEA we only had 1 family attend. We are going to it again on January 31, 2024, from 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM here at the CBI. Leading up to the next Open House/Missing Person Collection Clinic, we will be sending letters to all the reporting parties for the active list of missing persons in Colorado. Additionally, we will be sending letters to all the reporting parties for the active list of missing persons in Colorado.

Forensic Services

Carrie Davis, DNA Denver Laboratory Manager

CODIS Numbers-

Total Samples Received	8,633 (Approx 2,877 per month)
Number of Samples profiled	5,650 (Approx 1,883 per month)

Of those samples profiled	
- Arrestee samples	4,859
- Convicted Offender samples	791

Total number Offenders	578,442
Arrestee	362,735
Convicted Offenders including Juvenile Offenders	215,707

Total CODIS Hits for the Quarter	436 (Approx 145 per month).
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186 hits related to property crimes
76 hits related to burglary crimes
59 hits related to sex crimes cases
19 hits related to homicide cases
41 hits related to person crimes
37 hits related to robbery crimes

Forensic services continue to validate the CODIS familial searching capabilities. They are hoping to launch the availability of the search sometime in 2024.

The Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) system to be used in Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) is still being validated. They are hoping to launch this new capability sometime in 2024.

New Business

MMIR Dashboard – Analyst Melissa Mc Gaw

The dashboard has been created and lives on the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) website under the Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (OMMIR). The legislation was passed in July 2022 which required the creation of the Dashboard and the Missing Indigenous Person Alert (MIPA).

There is a lot of overlap between the dashboard and the Cold Case Database. Missing person cases are added to the dashboard when they have been missing for 6 months or more. Homicide cases are added when they are 3 years or more from the date the crime occurred. Unidentified remains are added as soon as it is determined they maybe indigenous.

The current stats for the dashboard include the following;

8 Missing Person
4 Unidentified Human Remains (UHR)
24 Homicides

The Dashboard also includes other information like how many Missing Indigenous Person Alerts (MIPA) have been issued, tribal affiliation and the jurisdiction requesting the Alert.

Open Forum -

Dawn Weber, Denver DA Office announced a development in a 2004 home invasion/sex assault with the use of FGG. The suspect in this case had a unique MO. Denver is now looking for any similar cases.

They are also awaiting results and running down some leads in 2 other cases from 2004.

Recent Successes –

1987 UHR Case – Jackson County SO was identified as Jerry Mikkelson

Potential lead in a 1982 Rocky Ford case of 2 missing girls being followed up.

Denver was recently successful in a domestic violence case in the use of 404B evidence that resulted in a successful prosecution.

Next Meeting-

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Friday, February 2, 2024. This meeting will be held from 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM. The meeting will be held at 690 Kipling Street in the first-floor conference room.