



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2011 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 11, 2011

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Local DNA Index System for Property Crime Reduction (LODIS)

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Palm Bay, Florida

Jurisdiction population(s): 107,252

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2010, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: February Year: 2007

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 2011. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Lee Feldman

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Palm Bay, FL

Name: Jonathan Lewis

Title: Deputy City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Palm Bay, FL

Name:

Title: Jurisdiction:

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Lee Feldman

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Palm Bay, FL

Street address: 120 Malabar Road SE

City: Palm Bay State/Province: FL

Zip/Postal Code: 32907 Country: United States

Telephone: (321) 952-3411 Fax: (321) 952-3412

E-mail: feldml@pbfl.org

ICMA Program Excellence Award
Community Health and Safety Awards (populations 50,000 or greater)

The City of Palm Bay is located southeast of Orlando on Florida's east central coast in Brevard County. Over the past five years the city's population has experienced a rapid growth surging to over 107,000 residents. Despite the growth trend, Palm Bay has experienced far fewer violent crimes per capita than seen in larger metropolitan areas; however, the city did see an increase in non-violent crimes such as burglary and theft. These types of crimes are often committed by local offenders and are usually tied to drug activity or juvenile delinquency. It is common knowledge and an accepted criminology statistic that a small number of criminals commit more than 80 percent of total crimes. Many of the offenders who commit violent crimes today have a history of petty crimes. With this in mind, the City of Palm Bay's Police Department partnered with DNA Security, Inc., (DNA-SI LABS) to develop a local agency database of forensic DNA that could be utilized on most crimes. The premise behind establishing a Local DNA Index System (LODIS) was to determine if mass collection of DNA from common crimes and subject reference samples could be placed into a database and developed into an effective investigative evidence tool to assist in identifying criminals and possibly connect them to seemingly unrelated crime scenes. For Palm Bay, the process had to be cost-effective and the results from the laboratory had to be expedient. The results would also have to be accessible by the average road officer or detective in an easy-to-understand format.

In the fall of 2006 Palm Bay Police Department learned of a pilot project planned by DNA:SI LABS, a North Carolina-based DNA forensic laboratory. The lab desired to bring widespread DNA-based intelligence to local police departments to help solve crime faster and

cheaper. The lab was seeking a law enforcement agency to collaborate with to make their concept a reality. The lab would supply the testing and programming while the agency provided policing expertise and real world feedback to the project.

Unlike the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which began with millions of fingerprints on file when it was first implemented, in order for LODIS to be useful, reference samples in sufficient numbers first had to be gathered. For six months, every officer, crime scene technician and detective was encouraged to submit any number of swabs collected from any type of crime that was processed. Palm Bay officers obtained DNA profiles from a wide variety of subjects: persons developed as suspects during stop-and-frisk scenarios, arrested suspects, and victims and witnesses for the purposes of eliminating them as suspects in the case of a mixed sample. Samples were collected with consent or through the normal booking process. Although the option was available to officers, no samples were taken by court order. The obtained samples provided a foundation for the development of Palm Bay's local DNA databank.

Officers were provided five hours of monthly in-service training to develop their DNA collecting skills and techniques. Training proved to be effective and also produced cost savings for the department. Officers developed skills which enabled them to cull evidence items believed to have the highest likelihood for yielding clear results from the lab for DNA profiles. Only these items were forwarded to the lab for processing, maximizing the number of usable DNA profiles and reducing laboratory costs.

Palm Bay Police Department and DNA:SI LABS developed processes that would deliver usable data to investigators within 30 days from the time it was sent to the lab. A series of four

easy-to-interpret reports were developed. An initial *Auto Alert* is e-mailed to the responsible officer of the collected sample within two weeks. This e-mail notifies all involved with the case of the submission results. Officers, investigators and management are quickly made aware of new matches. These *Auto Alert* e-mails direct those involved to the secure LODIS site for details. There, investigators may utilize the *Quick Results* report, the *Mini Reports*, or the *Instant Queries*. Each report provides more information regarding the sample submitted, the identified individual, and the interrelationship to that case as well as others that may be linked by DNA identification.

A feature of the LODIS system is its affordability. The DNA analysis kits used by Palm Bay cost \$100, as opposed to the \$800 charged by other state-approved laboratories. Because this program was executed as a collaborative effort with a commercial entity many startup costs were borne by the lab. Presently, LODIS costs the department approximately \$125K annually which is equivalent to the cost one patrol officer and a patrol car.

LODIS has benefited the City of Palm Bay in numerous ways, and the benefits are only expected to increase as the program continues to grow and develop. The largest identifiable savings has been the reduced theft within the community. Palm Bay Police crime reports show that residents and businesses have been spared \$6.2 million in theft losses since 2007, when the program began. Police investigators have realized incalculable savings with the implementation of LODIS, as suspects are identified earlier and multiple crimes are often closed with a single arrest. In addition, cases made using DNA evidence are contested less frequently, creating savings for prosecutors, judiciary, and police. Other benefits include:

- **Overall Crime Reduction** - Identification of previously “invisible” offenders removes them from the community more quickly, reducing overall crime. Multiple offenders and career criminals are more effectively and more promptly removed from the community. Palm Bay experienced a 26% reduction in property crime from 2006 through 2009. During that period there were no other significant changes in procedure or process except the implementation of LODIS.
- **More Cost Effective Policing & Improved Closure Rate** - All officers and investigators can collect effective evidence without costly CSI support. Arrests for multiple crimes linked by LODIS are clearly more cost effective and quickly improve closure rate. Suspects faced with DNA evidence of their crime confess more often and sooner than when DNA evidence does not exist.
- **Access to Powerful Real-time Tools** - Palm Bay officers and investigators use LODIS daily, accessing the database from their desks and cars. Collaborative features of the LODIS software leverage the efforts of investigators when DNA links a suspect to cases worked by different investigators.
- **Improved Conviction Rate** - There has been an increase in guilty pleas, to full charges, without trial.
- **Resource Allocation** - LODIS allowed the department to spend more time focusing on quality of life issues further improving the city’s overall good.

Local DNA indices can aid any community, and they can be deployed quickly and easily. LODIS allows working cops, patrol and investigation, to proactively utilize DNA, enabling more effective and efficient investigations, with fewer wrongful arrests.

LODIS has proven effective in identifying the local criminals who commit local crime. Because of LODIS, single arrests now often close multiple open cases. Since the program's start in 2007, the department's database has grown to include 12,900 samples with one-third of the samples yielding "hits" or matches, linking unidentified DNA evidence collected from previous crime scenes with new cases and suspects.

Replication of this program is certainly achievable for other police departments. Some things to consider before implementing such a program are: (1) understand that finding matches and solving cases will take time as the reference foundation is established, (2) start the collection of reference samples from known criminal suspects in advance and provide those reference specimens at the initiation of the program, and (3) the collection of DNA must be allowed all the way down the investigative process to the first-responder level, where appropriate.

Palm Bay Police Department has 168 sworn officers and 4 civilian crime scene investigators. LODIS successfully demonstrated that a police department of less than 200 sworn officers, properly trained, working with an accredited laboratory, could directly deploy and utilize a local DNA database to benefit their community. LODIS is the first application of its kind existing in law enforcement today. The system proved that a DNA databasing system, designed to provide "forensic intelligence," is a viable investigative tool for any police department. The essence of LODIS is that it allows for the widespread use of DNA evidence by all officers to investigate more crimes. This concept changes the role of DNA from just *confirming* evidence to an actual *investigative* tool that identifies offenders early in an investigation.