



HFSC Firearms Division Gets \$78,000 Grant for High-Tech Microscope

October 3, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ramit Plushnick-Masti

Public Information Officer

media@houstonforensicscience.org

713-929-6768

The Houston Forensic Science Center has been awarded \$78,374 through the Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act to purchase an additional comparison microscope. This microscope, the primary tool used by firearms examiners when they examine fired bullets and cartridge cases, fuses two microscopes into one, enabling analysts to compare two pieces of evidence simultaneously.

With this purchase, HFSC will have eight comparison microscopes, enabling examiners to efficiently investigate firearms used in crimes and link incidents when applicable.

“This microscope, one of the most important tools in our trade, will allow HFSC’s Firearms Section to work more productively, quickly and efficiently,” said Darrell Stein, manager of the Firearms Section.

The federal funds for this microscope are administered through Governor Rick Perry’s Criminal Justice Division.

HFSC’s Firearms Section receives about 3,500 requests for analyses annually and leads the state in number of entries into the ballistic imaging system, IBIS. This imaging system, containing images of fired cartridge cases submitted by law enforcement, allows examiners to link firearms between crimes, assisting police investigations. HFSC’s Firearms Section has linked more than

3,500 investigations not previously known to be related, making it one of the most successful firearms sections in the country.

The lab, formerly known as the Houston Police Department Crime Lab, has been managed by Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc., since April 3, 2014.

HFSC is overseen by a board of directors appointed by the Mayor of Houston and approved by the Houston City Council. HFSC manages the independent forensic laboratory that includes what was previously the HPD's crime lab and crime scene unit. HFSC currently operates in eight forensic disciplines and is expanding.

Further information regarding HFSC is available at www.houstonforensicscience.org.