

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2011

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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY JAMES B. MARTIN ANNOUNCES  
OPENING OF OFFICER DAVID M. PETZOLD DIGITAL  
FORENSICS LABORATORY OF LEHIGH COUNTY**

Lehigh County District Attorney James B. Martin announced the opening of the Officer David M. Petzold Digital Forensics Laboratory of Lehigh County at a news conference on March 24, 2011, at the laboratory on the campus of DeSales University in Center Valley.

The laboratory, which will be staffed by police officers from various municipal police departments in Lehigh County, is the first of its kind in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State Police have computer crime task force units and laboratories throughout the state, the FBI has a lab, and other counties have offices within police departments where forensic analysis is done. However, there are no similar countywide laboratories.

District Attorney Martin was joined by the Rev. Bernard F. O'Connor, OSFS, president of DeSales University; Jessica Petzold-Slawter, who is the widow of David Petzold and is the president and founder of a Memorial Foundation in Officer Petzold's name; Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham; Dean Browning, chairman of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners; the Rev. Thomas Dailey, OSFS, director of the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University; police chiefs in Lehigh County; Chief Deputy District Attorney

Matthew Falk; and officers who will work at the laboratory. Professors and faculty of DeSales University, family members of Jessica and David, and Memorial Foundation board members also attended the event.

The Officer David M. Petzold Memorial Foundation, which held various fund-raising events, contributed \$64,000 to the project. The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was created to honor the memory of the Upper Saucon Township officer who was struck and killed by a van when he was trying to remove a deer carcass from Route 309 in 2006.

County Executive Don Cunningham and the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, at the request of District Attorney Martin, approved and have provided \$31,250 toward the laboratory to match the \$31,250 contributed from nondrug forfeiture funds by the District Attorney.

“We could not have completed this laboratory without the help of DeSales University and the Memorial Foundation,” said District Attorney Martin. “Citizens of Lehigh County and untold victims of crimes that involve forensic analysis of cell phones, computers and other devices will benefit from this laboratory. This is a state-of-the-art hub that will help police officers to keep pace with ever-changing technology and stay abreast of ways that criminals use that technology.”

A great percentage of crimes, including burglaries, assaults, homicides, identity thefts, drug transactions, child pornography, and even prostitution cases, involve analyses of devices that contain evidence that is vital to investigations and prosecutions, according to Martin. One of the keys, he said, is having trained personnel and the right equipment to uncover that evidence and work with Internet providers and cell phone companies.

The equipment for such labs is expensive and would have been cost-prohibitive without the collaboration of everyone involved in the laboratory from its genesis to its completion, District Attorney Martin said. Some of the equipment that is used to process cell phones costs

\$8,000, and software used to process computers costs \$3,000 and more, Martin said.

DeSales University donated the space for the laboratory, which is located on the lower level of Dooling Hall, and all labor and materials needed to install equipment and prepare the laboratory for use. DeSales also is not charging any fees for electric usage and will provide future maintenance.

“DeSales University is proud of our service to the people of the Lehigh Valley and beyond,” said Rev. O’Connor. “Our commitment to law enforcement professionals is clear from the high quality of our undergraduate and graduate criminal justice degree programs. Today, we celebrate another milestone in our collaboration with Lehigh County.”

The University has a master’s program in digital forensics, and officials hope that an internship program can be created in the future that will allow criminal justice majors and students in the master’s program to benefit from the lab.

Jessica Petzold-Slawter said that David Petzold was one of Upper Saucon Township’s first detectives and investigated many computer crimes. “Dave was always about the welfare of children,” she said. “I think he would be proud of this lab, which will lend itself to preventing and solving child pornography cases.”

She said she started the Memorial Foundation “as a way to give back to the community that had given so much to my family when Dave was taken from us.”

“Dave loved people and his job, and because he is no longer able, I and the Foundation want to make a difference in his memory,” Petzold-Slawter said. Her three children, ages 12, 10 and 5; her husband, William Slawter Jr.; and family and friends attended the news conference.

Rev. Dailey, who knew Officer Petzold, proposed the idea of a project in the officer’s memory to university administrators and Upper Saucon police officers. Everyone believed that a

lab for forensic computer analysis was “a natural fit” because of Petzold’s work in that area and the university’s master’s program in digital forensics.

County Executive Don Cunningham said the County Administration wanted to make this new crime-fighting initiative a reality.

“Nearly 70 percent of the county’s budget is allocated for law and order, and much of that is used when crimes already have been committed to incarcerate defendants and supervise them on probation and parole,” Cunningham said. “This lab is an example of the county acting to prevent further crimes, rather than just reacting. Technology has made it easier for criminal activity to spread. However, that same technology leaves behind a footprint of evidence that can be used to find and prosecute defendants and eliminate some criminal activity.”

Dean Browning, chairman of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, said, “I was pleased that we were able to allocate money in the budget for Lehigh County to partner with the Officer David M. Petzold Memorial Foundation and DeSales University to establish a computer forensics laboratory. Not only does this allow Lehigh County to fulfill its primary responsibility of keeping its citizens safe, but it also lets us honor a law enforcement officer who devoted his life to that effort.”

District Attorney Martin credited Chief Deputy District Attorney Falk and Upper Saucon Township Police Officers Joseph Pochron and Thomas J. Nicoletti with developing equipment requirements and design for the laboratory with the help of State Police Trooper Paul Iannace, the Pennsylvania State Police Computer Crime Task Force coordinator for Southeastern Pennsylvania. Martin said the equipment that will be used has been designed for future upgrades.

Jessica Petzold-Slawter said that the Memorial Foundation expects to continue to make smaller donations each year to meet equipment needs.

District Attorney Martin thanked the chiefs of police in Lehigh County for giving unwavering support to the project and for designating officers from their departments to receive training and to operate the laboratory. He also thanked Bob Kennedy, Troy Stone, Julia Kocis and Mike Sitrler of the county's Office of Information Technology for lending their expertise to the project.

The lab will be staffed by 10 police officers who will be sworn as county detectives and will be members of the Lehigh County Computer Crimes Task Force. The officers are from Upper Saucon, South Whitehall, Lower Milford and Salisbury townships; Emmaus; Slatington; Allentown; Bethlehem; Coopersburg; and Berks-Lehigh Police Departments. The Pennsylvania State Police will act in a consulting role and will work with the county Task Force members.

Each officer will be at the lab for at least four hours a week. The salaries of the officers will continue to be paid by their municipalities. Training for the officers will be extensive and will be provided through the budget of the District Attorney.

From Monday to Friday during business hours, the lab will be manned by trained police officers. A detective will always be on-call so that if there is a shooting or homicide in the middle of the night, and timely analysis is critical, a detective will be available, Martin said. At some point, he said, he hopes to have the lab staffed full time.

District Attorney Martin said that before this lab was created, all forensic analysis of computers, cell phones, and other digital and electronic equipment was done by a state police computer crimes unit that was responsible for serving 10 counties, including Philadelphia. The Lehigh County lab will be an additional resource that will ease the burden on state police and will yield faster results for Lehigh County police investigations and prosecutions conducted by the District Attorney's Office, Martin said.

In Southeastern Pennsylvania alone, the number of forensic analyses of evidence increased 36 percent from 2009 to 2010, said State Police Trooper Iannace. He added that the number of arrests involving computer analyses jumped 98 percent from 2009 to 2010.

The Lehigh County lab also will be important in conducting pro-active investigations to find distributors of child pornography and other suspects having inappropriate and criminal online conversations with children, according to Martin.

Officers at the lab not only will analyze computers and cell phones that are brought to the lab from police departments but also will be able to work on enhancing recordings from audio-visual equipment, such as video from surveillance cameras mounted in establishments and on streets, Martin said.

Before detectives examine a hard drive, they will copy it and keep the original, which will be secured. Detectives then will work on the copy. They also will make a digital copy so there are two backups. A third copy may be made for court proceedings.

For now, detectives in the lab will only analyze cases from Lehigh County. “Hopefully, we will in the future also be able to expand this laboratory to service police departments in adjoining counties so it becomes a truly regional facility,” District Attorney Martin said.

As more devices have the capability to link with computers, investigators may be examining gaming systems, televisions, music players and anything that can hold data or be connected to the Internet, Martin said. In the future, he added, that may even involve vehicles.

The intake/reception room, conference room, evidence room and working areas have multiple layers of security. They are accessible only by key, password and identification card. The walls in the room where computers will be examined are not made of drywall but are constructed of Fiberglass reinforced gypsum board that is heavy and dense.

If there is a breach of security, DeSales University security and Task Force members will automatically be contacted.

Allentown

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