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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

WILLIAM THOMSON
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

May 31, 2001

The Honorable Ken Bennett, Chairman
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Roberta L. Voss, Vice Chairman
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Bennett and Representative Voss:

Our Office has recently completed a 6-month follow-up of the Department of Public Safety—Scientific Analysis Bureau regarding the implementation status of the 15 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in September 2000 (Auditor General Report No. 00-12). As the attached grid indicates:

- 15 of the 15 recommendations have been implemented.

Since all of the audit recommendations have been implemented and unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this report concludes our follow-up work on the Department of Public Safety—Scientific Analysis Bureau.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

Attachment

cc: Colonel Dennis Garrett, Director JLAC Members
Department of Public Safety

Senate Judiciary Committee Members House Retirement and Government
Operations Committee Members

Ms. Sheryl Rabin
Senate Research Analyst Ms. Tami Stowe
House Research Analyst

Mr. James Keane
Senate Research Analyst

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Scientific Analysis Bureau
6- Month Follow-Up Report to
Auditor General Report No. 00-12

FINDING I: Steps Needed to Expand the DNA Database Program’s Crime-Solving Potential

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>1. The crime lab should develop a strategic plan specific to the DNA database program’s operations, addressing its analysis of both convicted offender samples as well as non-suspect crime-scene evidence. At a minimum, this plan should define the DNA database program’s mission and goals, and establish key objectives and performance measures for determining the program’s efficiency and effectiveness.</p>	<p>Implemented at 6 months</p>	

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FINDING I: Steps Needed to Expand the DNA Database Program’s Crime-Solving Potential (Cont’d)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>2. To improve the operation and management of its DNA database program, the crime lab should expand its current procedures. These expanded procedures should minimally focus on:</p> <p>a. Periodically assessing the amount of non-suspect crime-scene evidence available for database comparison;</p> <p>b. Determining what non-suspect crime-scene evidence the crime lab will analyze and upload to the DNA database;</p> <p>c. Prioritizing its analysis of non-suspect crime-scene evidence; and</p> <p>d. Improving coordination with agencies responsible for submitting convicted offender samples to ensure submitting agencies are aware of the importance of submitting all samples and that they are submitted with accurate and complete identifying information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 6 months</p>	

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FINDING I: Steps Needed to Expand the DNA Database Program’s Crime-Solving Potential (Cont’d)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>3. The crime lab should continue in its efforts to reduce and prioritize its convicted offender backlog. Specifically, the crime lab should:</p> <p>a. Seek opportunities to increase its outsourcing of offender samples to enable the DNA unit to concentrate on analyzing more non-suspect crime-scene evidence;</p> <p>b. Develop effective procedures for ensuring that technical reviews are completed as quickly as possible; and</p> <p>c. Revise current prioritization practices in consideration of present and future offenses subject to DNA testing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 6 months</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 6 months</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 6 months</p>	
<p>4. The crime lab should dedicate one or more criminalists to the specific responsibility of analyzing non-suspect crime-scene cases.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 6 months</p>	

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FINDING I: Steps Needed to Expand the DNA Database Program’s Crime-Solving Potential (Concl’d)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
5. In conjunction with developing procedures and reducing its offender sample backlog, the crime lab needs to regularly assess whether it has resources to effectively implement the DNA database program, and develop a request for additional staff and equipment if necessary.	Implemented at 6 months	

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FINDING II: Crime-Lab Needs to Take Additional Steps to Address Toxicology Backlog

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. To increase the toxicology unit's productivity, the crime lab should formally assess whether lab technician responsibilities can be expanded to include providing direct support to the criminalists during the analysis process.	Implemented at 6 months	
2. The crime lab should acquire software and related programming to allow direct transfer of case information from lab instruments to the crime lab's automated system.	Implemented at 6 months	
3. To help ensure that the toxicology unit's final reports are disseminated as quickly as possible, the crime lab should develop a system for tracking how quickly reviews are completed.	Implemented at 6 months	
4. The crime lab should formally analyze the cost benefit of expanding blood alcohol testing to the northern and southern regional crime labs.	Implemented at 6 months	

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FINDING II: Crime-Lab Needs to Take Additional Steps to Address Toxicology Backlog (Concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>5. The crime lab should enhance its written action plan for the toxicology unit by incorporating such items as the projected number of cases each criminalists can process per month as well as revising its projected dates for when backlogs can be eliminated in both the alcohol and drug areas.</p>	<p>Implemented at 6 months</p>	