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Director Mueller Announces New Regional Computer Forensics Laboratories in Los Angeles and Albuquerque

FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, III today announced that Los Angeles, California and Albuquerque, New Mexico were selected as the host sites for two new FBI-sponsored Regional Computer Forensics Laboratories (RCFLs). An RCFL is a digital forensics laboratory where highly trained Computer Analysis Response Team (CART) certified examiners conduct forensic examinations of digital media, such as computers, in support of an investigation and/or prosecution of a federal, state, or local crime. With the addition of these facilities, the number of RCFLs will increase to 16 nationwide.

Director Mueller said, "The RCFL Program is one of law enforcement’s most cost-effective and productive high-tech initiatives operating today. By bringing the resources of the RCFL Program to Los Angeles and Albuquerque, the FBI is doing its part to build digital forensics capacity at the local level. Both cities have strong support from their partners in local law enforcement and are ideal candidates for RCFLs."

An RCFL is a unique partnership between the FBI and other law enforcement agencies representing federal, state, and local governments operating within a geographic area. The FBI provides start-up and operational funding, training, and equipment. Participating law enforcement agencies provide their own forensic examiners, as well as additional staff for operating the RCFL. Participating agencies receive access to expert digital forensics examination and advisory services from the examiners on staff. The examiners from outside the FBI will also have access to sophisticated technical training and will receive FBI CART certification. Examiners would receive continuing state of the art computer forensic instruction after certification is obtained.

The potential participating agencies in the Los Angeles RCFL include the Orange County Sheriff’s Department; Orange County District Attorney’s Office; Anaheim Police Department; Santa Ana Police Department; Irvine Police Department; Westminster Police Department; Newport Beach Police Department; and the Fullerton Police Department.

“The RCFL will assume a key role in solving computer crimes through forensic analysis in Southern California, where technology evolves rapidly, and cyber criminals focus much of their illegal activity,” said Sal Hernandez, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI in Los Angeles. “The center will serve as a much needed resource for the FBI and regional law enforcement community to solve these crimes. When the new RCFL is opened in the near future, our law enforcement partners, who have worked toward the creation of this center with a great spirit of cooperation, will contribute at least fifteen forensic examiners to the cadre of FBI examiners.”

The potential participating agencies in the New Mexico RCFL include the New Mexico Attorney General’s Office; New Mexico State Police; Albuquerque Police Department; University of New Mexico; Los Alamos National Laboratory; Bernalillo County Sheriff’s Office; Department of Homeland Security-Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Valencia County Sheriff’s Office; University of New Mexico Police Department; Rio Rancho Department of Public Safety; Sandia National Laboratories; and the Santa Fe County Sheriff’s Office.

“The creation of an RCFL in Albuquerque will ensure that law enforcement in New Mexico stays ahead of the ever changing technology associated with an exploding cyber crime problem,” said Special Agent in Charge Thomas C. McLenaghan, of the...
Albuquerque Division. “Working with our partners at the University of New Mexico, Sandia National Lab, and Los Alamos National Lab will expose our federal, state, and local forensic examiners to world class and cutting edge cyber scientists and instructors. New Mexico will quickly become known throughout the nation and world as the place to go for computer forensic instruction.”

Typically, it requires between 18 and 24 months to fully establish a new RCFL, which includes building and equipping the facility and training and certifying the incoming examiners. To learn more about the RCFL Program, visit their website at www.rcfl.gov.

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