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TechBeat

November 2018

by JTIC

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About TechBeat

TechBeat is the monthly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System. Our goal is to keep you up to date on technologies for the public safety community and research efforts in government and private industry.

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The NLECTC System

The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a component of the National Institute of Justice's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System, serves as an information resource for technology and equipment related to law enforcement, corrections and courts and as a primary point of contact for administration of a voluntary equipment standards and testing program for public safety equipment.

JTIC is part of the NLECTC System, which includes the Justice Innovation Center for Small, Rural, Tribal, and Border Criminal Justice Agencies, which focuses on the unique law enforcement challenges faced by those types of agencies; the National Criminal Justice Technology Research, Test and Evaluation Center, which provides technology-related research and testing and operational evaluations of technologies; and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, which supports technology research, development, testing and evaluation efforts in forensic science. In addition, a Priority Criminal Justice Needs Initiative exists to assess and prioritize technology needs across the criminal justice community.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

WWW.JUSTNET.ORG

JUSTNET News. Includes article abstracts on law enforcement, corrections and forensics technologies that have appeared in major newspapers, magazines and periodicals and on national and international wire services and websites.

Testing Results. Up-to-date listing of public safety equipment evaluated through NIJ's testing program. Includes ballistic- and stab-resistant armor, patrol vehicles and tires, and more.

Calendar of Events. Lists upcoming meetings, seminars and training.

Social Media. Access our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube feeds for the latest news and updates.

Tech Topics. Browse for information on law enforcement, corrections and courts technologies.

http://www.youtube.com/JUSTNETorg

Pennsylvania Models a Streamlined Approach to Inmate Management

Pennsylvania Models a Streamlined Approach to Inmate Management

Every administrator in a large corrections system at some time has looked at the stacks of paper and the labor hours it takes to do some ongoing task, and thought that there has to be a better way. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Corrections found a better way to assign inmates among its 25 facilities, and the effort it took to create the Inmate Assignment Decision Support System (IADSS) can serve as a model for state and large city corrections agencies looking to streamline similar daunting tasks.

On Aug. 30, 2018, "Streamlining Inmate Assignment in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections," a webinar produced by the Justice Technology Information Center, explained how the PA DOC worked with Lehigh University to develop IADSS. The system has reduced a task that took 40 labor hours each week to an automated function that takes minutes, and in the process saved the department nearly $3 million in its first year of use.
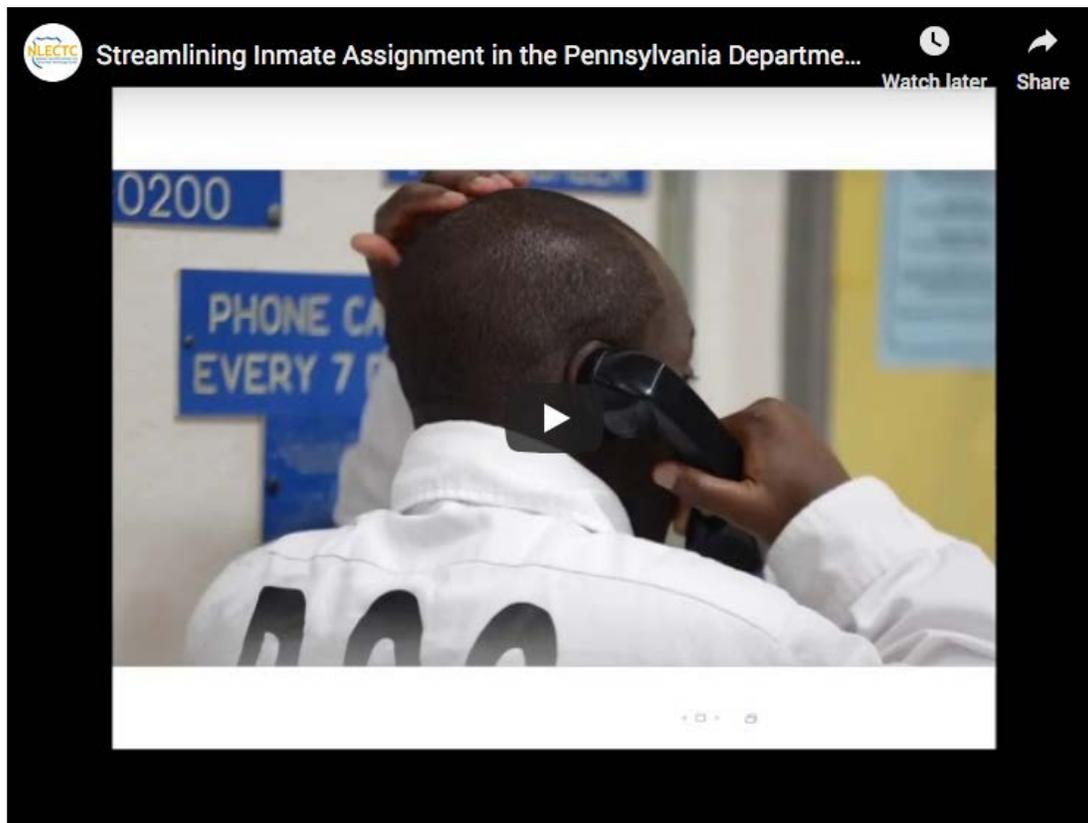
Bill Nicklow, the director of the Office of Population Management at the time of IADSS implementation, says that the commonwealth generally has around 750 inmates each week that either are new to the system or need to be transferred, and staff perform needs and risk assessments on each inmate regarding rehabilitation, education, medical concerns and security issues.

"When the assessments were completed, we would start the assignment process by looking at beds and resources available for the first person on the list," says Nicklow, now a major in the state's Bureau of Investigations and Intelligence. "Staff made good decisions for the first names on the list, but by the time we got to inmate 300, the decisions weren't as good because we had already used up a lot of the available resources. As a result, some inmates had to keep moving to different facilities because of unmet needs. He or she might get needed programming at one facility, but need to move to another for education."

IADSS, in contrast, looks at all inmates and all available resources simultaneously and makes the best decision possible for every inmate. The system produces objective decisions, rather than the more subjective decisions produced during a manual review. Its implementation

allowed PDOC to improve security, save resources and reduce inmate transportation costs. It also reduced waiting lists for necessary programs by an average of 54 days, meaning inmates may become eligible for parole sooner.

"All of that was a direct result of the work done by the system," Nicklow says. "When I became director, we decided to take a systematic look at what we were doing and why we were doing it. We found out that we were doing some things just because we had always done them. We took a look at the whole process and broke it down, which was very educational for us and helped us cut out a lot of unnecessary tasks."

Nicklow cautions any agency considering undertaking a similar operation that the development process is time-consuming and staff need to be vested in it, but the results can be tremendous and long-lasting.

"We're seeing better decisions for inmates and an increase in productivity. The return on our investment over a 10-year period [$38 million] is pretty staggering," he says.

Because of those results, Pennsylvania has discussed using the same development process to look at other complex, time-consuming tasks, such as transportation arrangements and overtime adjustments.

"I think that any state, regardless of size, can benefit from this type of process, and large city agencies could benefit as well. Even a smaller agency could benefit from taking a hard look at how things are done to eliminate unnecessary steps. Every system is different, with different parameters and rules, so unfortunately we can't offer a one-size-fits-all solution to share, but we'd be glad to talk with anyone interested in following this approach," Nicklow says.

For more information about the Inmate Assignment Decision Support System, contact Bill Nicklow at wnicklow@pa.gov. If you have a model program or innovative process that you would like to share with the corrections community, contact Joe Russo with the Justice Technology Information Center at jrusso@du.edu.

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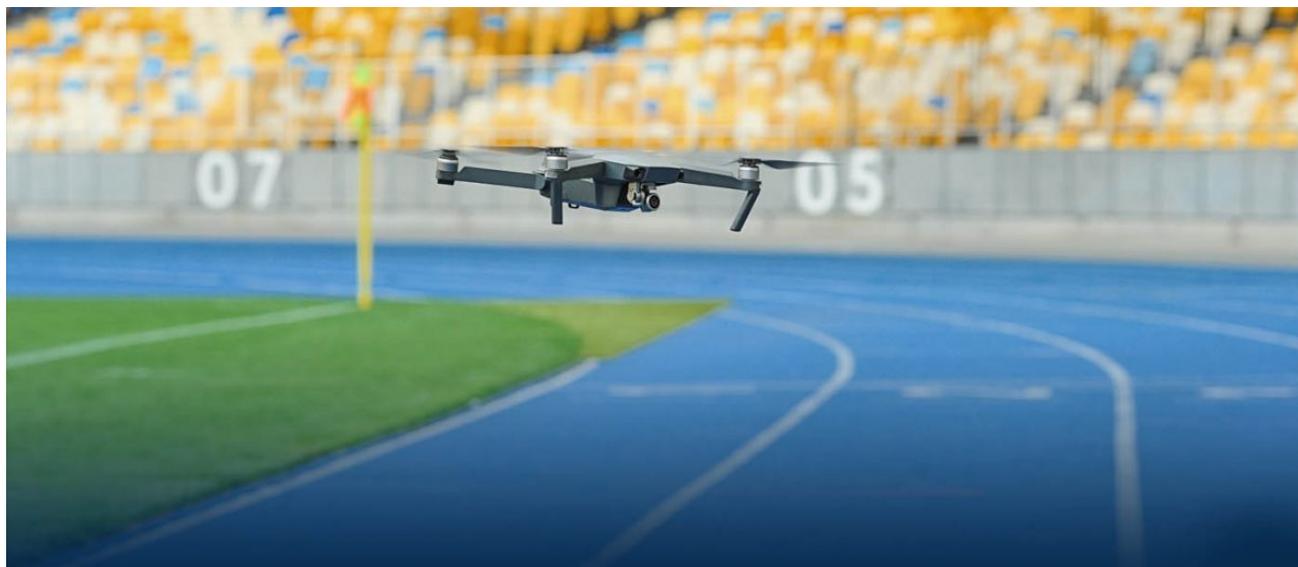
National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security Offers UAS-Related Resources

National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security Offers UAS-Related Resources

"Reporting in from the south parking lot. There's a young kid out here with a drone, buzzing and annoying spectators coming in for the game."

"Well, tell him to cut it out."

"That's why I'm calling in…am I allowed to do that? What kind of rules apply to drones?"

A similar conversation could take place somewhere in the United States at a high school sporting event, a small college, or even a larger university. Unmanned aircraft systems/unmanned aerial vehicles (UAS/UAV), better known to the public as drones, can be purchased for relatively little money and launched into the sky with no training. Sometimes their pilots are children or hobbyists; sometimes they are individuals with other goals in mind.

Information about what these individuals can and cannot do — as well as information about how law enforcement agencies, schools and venue management can make use of UAS capabilities — can be hard to come by. With all of that in mind, the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4) at the University of Southern Mississippi held a two-day UAV Innovation and Technology Forum on May 15-16, 2018, and subsequently released a summary report from the event and created a website of related resources.

"The main message we want to put out is that drone technologies are constantly evolving, and we need to be aware of their threat potential as well as ways we can leverage the technology ourselves," says Daniel Ward, NCS4 assistant director of curriculum. "We encourage individuals involved in spectator sports security to reach out to us for information. We collect information and polices from the professional level all the way down to K-12 schools, and if we can't provide the direct support someone needs, we can point them in the direction of someone who can."

Holding the summit was one of many ways that NCS4 collects that information. From a number of applications, NCS4 selected approximately 60 attendees from the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, sports and entertainment venues, colleges and high schools, and law enforcement and other public safety agencies. Participants spent a portion of both days discussing key issues and concerns, becoming more familiar with key federal initiatives and developing a path forward. They also took part in a variety of hands-on technology demonstrations.

"We wanted to make sure we had multiple perspectives," Ward says. "Someone working in facilities management has different concerns than a law enforcement professional. Someone working in operations has a different mindset than someone working in emergency management. One might see it as a marketing tool, and another might see it as a benefit for situational awareness among public safety agencies. And there is always awareness of the threat that UAS can pose."

Given that smaller universities, colleges and school districts have limited financial resources, Ward says it's important to remember that while not everyone can purchase UAS technology

for their own use or spend a lot of money on a monitoring system, everyone can exercise several other low-cost/no-cost options that apply. For example, they can create a policy, become more familiar with existing technologies and their capabilities, and improve communication and develop partnerships with the local public safety community. They also need to be aware of state and local policies and regulations that may restrict or prohibit the use of UAS at sports venues and over private property such as some universities, because these vary widely.

Other best practices noted during the summit include establishing proactive marketing activities, incorporating UAS policies into student codes of conduct and emphasizing a "see something-say something" approach to UAS.

"We encourage schools and venues to make sure they have a policy in place and to do whatever they can to make the public aware of it, through means such as school websites and signage. In addition to making sure you communicate your expectations, you need to maintain vigilance. A lot of drone operators are not aware of restrictions or consequences, so we need to make sure we are educating people as best we can," Ward says.

If financial resources exist to use the technology for helping with crowd control or just providing a new angle on game footage, schools and venues at every level need to reach out to the local FAA representative for help in developing a usage policy. Ward notes that the FAA wants to provide support, although that support does not extend to enforcing local policies and ordinances.

Potential UAS users also need to be aware that the FAA continues to revise its existing policies and develop new ones as the technology continues to evolve. Ward says that's because when it comes to UAS, technology is outpacing policy development: "We're constantly operating in catch-up mode. We need to try to protect spectators and staff, and at the same time, do it within legal and appropriate boundaries. As a center, our role is to build awareness and educate people so they can enhance awareness and security."

For more information on the summit, click here. To contact NCS4, phone (601) 266-6183.

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FTCoE Takes New Approach to Informing Stakeholders

FTCoE Takes New Approach to Informing Stakeholders

Webinars. Podcasts. A conference report. Links to articles and workshop presentations. A new topical focus on a redesigned website. All of these are elements in the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (FTCoE) promotion of educational materials related to forensic pathology and medicolegal death investigations (MDI).

The wide array of materials on this topic isn't a one-off effort, but rather the start of a new approach, according to the FTCoE's Rebecca Shute: "We're trying to focus on themes that are very timely and we're taking an approach that involves several different types of deliverables. Using this multi-pronged approach will help us reach as many users as we possibly can."

While forensic pathology and MDI are the first topics to benefit from the new approach, the Center has plans to emphasize at least a half-

dozen more topics in the same way during 2019.

"Everybody processes information differently; some people are visual and some would rather hear it. I work on a lot of landscape reports, but sometimes people just don't want to sift through that much information," Shute says. "They would rather listen to a podcast while they're running errands, or watch a webinar during lunch."

For those who prefer the latter two methods, NIJ's FTCoE offers a four-episode special series of its Just Science podcast program, touching on topics such as the difference between coroners and medical examiners and how their roles differ, and several webinars on related topics, including two fall 2018 webinars related to entomology and postmortem interval estimation, or time of death.

"We're focusing on MDI and forensic pathology now because of two recent conferences: the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IAC&ME) Annual Training Conference in July and the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) Annual Meeting in October. The FTCoE promoted their MDI resources at both of these annual events," Shute says.

Understanding the varying needs of professionals in this field is also a priority of NIJ, which supports the FTCoE. The Center produced a report on *Strengthening the Medical Examiner– Coroner System Through NIJ-funded Programs: 2018 Medicolegal Death Investigation Stakeholders' Meeting*, an NIJ-sponsored event that brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from 21 states and the District of Columbia in February 2018.

NIJ's goals for the meeting included learning how the agency can better help the community with its high-priority needs, identify solutions to help with their challenges, and inform participants about existing NIJ programs and initiatives. NIJ had initiated this effort in response to both a nationwide shortage of forensic pathologists and recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences, the National Commission on Forensic Science, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy's National Science and Technology Council.

That NIJ prioritization and stakeholders' meeting made the topic a natural fit as the first one to benefit from the new FTCoE approach, which is also timed to work with the redesign of the FTCoE home page.

"We have redesigned the home page so that it's easier to use and to find information on what you're looking for," Shute says. "All of the new information is right up front, and it's easy to find links to topics of interest, including pathology and MDI."

Following that link here leads the user to the aforementioned podcasts and webinars, along with reports, archived workshops and other resources.

"We're able to offer a lot of solid information to the forensics community and we want to be as comprehensive as possible in doing it," says Shute. "Switching to this approach allows us to provide a lot of value to multiple stakeholders. We're trying to be more intentional in serving end users better."

For more information on forensics programs of the National Institute of Justice, contact Gerald LaPorte, Director, Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences, at Gerald.LaPorte@usdoj.gov.

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Report on Strategies for Strengthening Homicide Investigations

Bureau of Justice Assistance and Police Executive Research Forum

With support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Police Executive Research Forum conducted a multi-year project to assess homicide investigation practices in five cities: Baltimore, Cleveland, Houston, Miami and Pittsburgh. A recent report summarizes the lessons learned from those studies.

The report documents the findings and recommendations from the site assessments, and from a conference held by PERF and BJA in January 2017 that assembled officials from the five sites and experts in the field of homicide investigations.

Findings and recommendations are in chapters on Homicide Unit Policies and Procedures; Detective and Supervisor Selection Process; Investigations Training; Staffing and Caseload Management; Supervision, Accountability and Oversight; Cold Case Unit; Internal Coordination; External Coordination; Homicide Unit Equipment and Technology; and The

Future of Homicide Investigations: Digital Evidence and Crime Analysis.

The report, *Promising Strategies for Strengthening Homicide Investigations: Findings and Recommendations from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training and Technical Assistance Project*, is available here.

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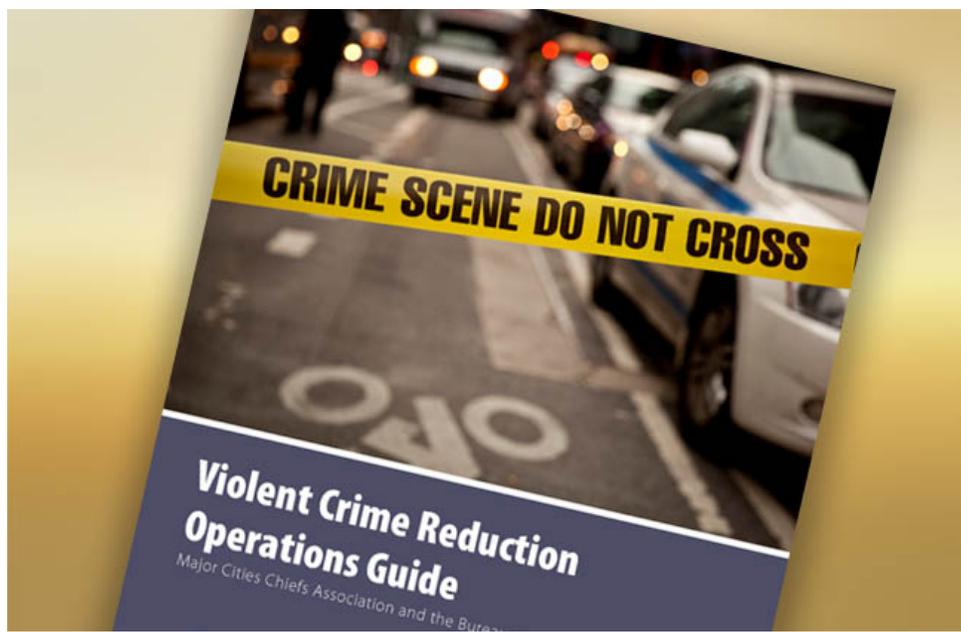
Violent Crime Reduction Operations Guide

Major Cities Chiefs Association and Bureau of Justice Assistance

Developed by the Major Cities Chiefs Association with support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, this resource outlines actions and activities that have contributed to successful crime-fighting strategies in the U.S.

The purpose of the *Violent Crime Reduction Operations Guide* is to identify the critical elements of violent crime reduction efforts. It includes a sample of the programs, services and assistance available from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The guide includes sections on law enforcement leadership, violent crime identification and analysis, and critical elements of strategies to fight violent crime, such as community engagement, partnerships, technology, training and tactics. The Resource and Program Appendix provides a high-level outline of resources, training and assistance available to assist police executives in building capacity, and case studies feature examples of how those

resources have been implemented nationwide.

Access the guide here.

Main photo: Major Cities Chiefs Association