



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact:
Melissa Milburn
206.972.9096

Melissa@milburncommunications.com

“CSI Effect” Creates Challenges for Crime Fighting

Forensic Science Technology Fair on Capitol Hill Features Latest Tools

Washington DC – April 6, 2005 – The hit TV shows “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” are exciting, entertaining dramas that have helped educate the public about forensic science. The truth is, however, most American crime labs are under-funded, located in aging facilities, lack the latest equipment, and are not fully staffed. More than one out of every four labs lacks basic computers for processing evidence. As a result, real crime labs are often unable to produce the type of evidence the public is used to seeing on TV.

To help make this point, the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) is sponsoring its 2005 Forensic Science Technology Fair this week on Capitol Hill. The Tech Fair will be held Thursday, April 7, 12:00 – 5:00 pm in the Hart Senate Office Building, Room 902.

“Tremendous progress has been made with technology used to collect and evaluate evidence from a crime scene,” said Joseph Polski, Chair, Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations. “However, we’re facing a new challenge from TV’s “CSI Effect.” Polski added, “What people see on television is not the real world. Juries often expect to see a tight package of DNA evidence, without understanding that there are many other forensic tools that can be used successfully. The technology shown on TV is financially out of reach for many crime labs.”

Thursday’s forensics technology fair will feature hands-on, technology demonstrations on a broad array of equipment and forensic science techniques ranging from the latest in biometrics and fingerprinting, to DNA, drug analysis and forensic biology, document examination, crime scene investigation, and more. In addition, several leading members of the national forensics community will be available to answer questions and provide valuable insights on these amazing tools – now finding increasing value in modern crime fighting and prevention.

At a CFSO Awards Reception, the CFSO will recognize U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) and U.S. Representative Bill Young (R-FL) for their roles in securing congressional support for the forensic science community with its “Friend of Forensics Award.” Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) was the first recipient of this award, at last year’s event, and will be in attendance.

Best-selling crime novelist Jeffery Deaver will present the awards and speak about the importance of forensic science. Deaver is the author of bestselling novels “The Vanished Man,” “The Stone Monkey” and “The Bone Collector,” which was made into a movie. **The Awards Reception is Wednesday, April 6, 4:00 – 7:00 pm in the Russell Senate Office Building, Room 189.**

About CFSO

CFSO is an association of six forensic science professional organizations: American Academy of Forensic Sciences; American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors; American Society of Crime Lab Directors – Laboratory Accreditation Board; Forensic Quality Services; International Association for Identification; and National Association of Medical Examiners. These professional organizations together represent more than 11,000 forensic science professionals across the United States. The mission of the CFSO is to influence public policy at the national level and make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner offices.

###

CFSO: A coalition of national forensic science organizations:

American Academy of Forensic Sciences
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/
Laboratory Accreditation Board
Forensic Quality Services
International Association for Identification
National Association of Medical Examiners