

Middlesex, Union Counties Agree to Share Forensics Laboratory Services

Middlesex County Acting Prosecutor Andrew C. Carey and Union County Acting Prosecutor Grace H. Park announced today that a new DNA analyst has been hired to work at the Union County Prosecutor's Office Forensics Laboratory in Westfield under a shared-services agreement reached between the Middlesex and Union county boards of chosen freeholders.

Under the agreement, the analyst, Frank D. Basile, has begun working in the laboratory as a Middlesex County employee who will spend about 75 percent of his time analyzing and cataloguing DNA and other forensics evidence gathered by investigators from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office.

The remainder of his time will be devoted to assisting the Union County Prosecutor's Office with its forensic analyses.

Mr. Basile, who began working at the lab in November, comes from the private sector after spending six years in the field of forensic DNA testing at a fully-accredited lab.

Based on his education, training and professional experience, Mr. Basile has been qualified many times to testify as a forensics and DNA expert at criminal trials.

He holds a Master of Forensic Sciences degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Basile was hired after the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders reached an agreement with the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders to share services at the forensics

laboratory.

As part of the agreement, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office will have access to the laboratory and will be entitled to its full use in analyzing, categorizing and storing important DNA and other forensics samples that can be used as evidence in the prosecution of criminal cases.

Acting Prosecutor Carey thanked the Middlesex and Union county freeholders for reaching the shared-services agreement, which "provides the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office full use of the Union County Forensics Laboratory."

"With this agreement, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office adds another valuable resource to detect and prosecute crimes. We look forward to a long and productive partnership with Union County and we appreciate their willingness to assist us," Acting Prosecutor Carey said.

Middlesex County Freeholder Director Ronald G. Rios praised the shared services agreement. "This is the latest in a long list of shared services arrangements that enable us to reduce expenses for our taxpayers, while enhancing our services and our efforts to ensure their safety and well-being."

Freeholder H. James Polos, chair of the Middlesex County Public Safety and Health Committee, said "Partnering with our governmental entities, whether it be municipalities, counties, or the state, strengthens our services and responsiveness."

Union County Acting Prosecutor Park also welcomed the shared-services agreement. "We are thrilled to partner with Middlesex County on this agreement. We believe that leveraging the resources of our forensics laboratory to aid in Middlesex County's investigations will greatly benefit both Union and Middlesex counties," acting Prosecutor Park said. "We are extremely proud of our state-of-the-art forensics laboratory and we welcome Mr. Basile to its staff," she said.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office Forensics Laboratory was established in 1972 to analyze physical evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies in Union County and was the first county prosecutor's lab in New Jersey. The laboratory also occasionally extends services to the DEA, Customs, and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey police.

The laboratory received accreditation in the disciplines of Controlled Substances and Biology through the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) in 2008.

The laboratory's biology section provides DNA analysis to support criminal prosecutions. The Forensic Laboratory has the ability to search DNA profiles that meet the FBI's requirements, to that of convicted offenders and DNA profiles from other unsolved cases via the Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS.

The lab handles thousands of cases each year, and has played an instrumental role in solving many high-profile cases, including "cold case" homicides.

"The Union County Prosecutor's Office Forensic Laboratory was the first county laboratory in New Jersey to receive DNA certification from the ASCLD/LAB and just the second overall in the state, following the New Jersey State Police Forensic Laboratory," Acting Prosecutor Park said.

The director of the lab, Matthew Gabriel, directs and evaluates the supervision of chemical, instrumental, and physical analysis of evidence, including the examination and testing of controlled substances and DNA samples to support investigative and prosecutorial efforts. He began working at the laboratory in December 2011, following a nationwide search.