

ISP Announces Opening Of New Forensic Science Laboratory

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DECATUR – Illinois State Police (ISP) Director Brendan F. Kelly today announced ISP has received final accreditation for the new ISP Decatur Forensic Science Laboratory and it is now officially open for business. The new four-story facility located along U.S. Route 51 on the south side of Decatur houses 12,200-square feet of laboratory space and will serve law enforcement agencies across the state.



“This top-tier facility will increase capacity to significantly reduce turnaround time for DNA testing, produce rapid results, and further reduce the case backlog,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Since day one, my administration has been committed to delivering justice for every Illinoisan, and this new Decatur lab will ensure we can accomplish that.”

The new lab will focus on high-throughput DNA testing, which comprises about 20% of all ISP forensic cases in the laboratory system. Forensic scientists at the laboratory will examine evidence collected from crime scenes and analyze biological material to identify DNA profiles from suspects.

“The Decatur facility is equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology and will be staffed with highly trained individuals who are critical to providing DNA analysis for the citizens of Illinois,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “The new lab will further reduce backlogs and allow us to solve crimes faster and bring justice to all involved.”

The new high-throughput DNA laboratory utilizes robotics, which will increase ISP’s testing capacity. These robots can process case samples with minimal hands on from the forensic scientist. The technology will be crucial in providing a short turn around for cases such as property crimes, homicides, and criminal sexual assaults requiring DNA analysis.

The Decatur facility houses ISP’s seventh forensic laboratory, as well as Crime Scene Services. The new facility brings new jobs to the area and has space for approximately 27 employees, including 12 forensic scientists, five evidence technicians, five administrative staff, and five crime scene investigators. Approximately \$5.4 million was awarded for staffing and equipment at the new laboratory for the first year.

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The ISP forensic science laboratory system has been recognized as one of the largest crime laboratory systems in the world providing forensic science analytical services to more than 1,200 state, county, and local criminal justice agencies. The ISP laboratory system, currently comprised of seven operational laboratories and a training and application laboratory, processes evidence from criminal cases in seven disciplines: drug chemistry, trace chemistry, toxicology, biology/DNA, latent prints, firearms/toolmarks, and footwear/tire tracks.

The average turn-around-time for a DNA case to be completed is 3.6 months. At the end of March 2023, 37% of the assignments for DNA analyses were completed in 60 days or less. Backlogs in testing for trace chemistry, drug chemistry, latent prints, firearms, toxicology, and footwear have all decreased by approximately 37% since 2021.

In June 2022, ISP announced that after decades of extensive sexual assault forensic backlogs, the number of pending sexual assault forensic assignments older than 180 days reached zero. This was the first time since the General Assembly passed the Illinois [Sexual Assault Evidence Submission Act](#) in 2010 that the State of Illinois was in compliance with the statute.

Video inside the ISP Decatur Forensic Science Laboratory can be found at <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLal67FUxR4zO9mGFiNc5zifgZApSdg8db>.