

## CIVICS

## Tulsa County Takes the Lead to Pass Rapid DNA Act

While DNA is the most powerful investigative technology available to law enforcement, it has been terribly underutilized in investigations. Historically, DNA results have taken months or even years due to over worked and underfunded state labs. As a result, there are also many occasions where a person of interest is booked into a jail on an unrelated offense and the jail administrators don't know that this person is wanted for another crime where his DNA was collected. The best know case of this was the crime spree of Ted Bundy across America.

To fix this problem, Congress passed the "Rapid DNA" bill in 2017. This bill tied state labs and jail booking systems into the FBI's criminal DNA database. This will allow states and

localities to use this latest DNA technology and interface with the FBI's data base. However, before this could happen, state legislators would have to pass legislation allowing the use of the Rapid DNA technology in the state.

### From Tulsa County



By COMMISSIONER  
RON PETERS

With Tulsa County taking the lead, The Rapid DNA Act, authored by Representative Carol Bush and Senator Wayne Shaw was passed, making Oklahoma one of the few states to have done this.

The taking of DNA during the booking process is following along the same path as other criminal investigative tools like electronic fingerprinting, breathalyzer and drug testing. The DNA collected at booking is used to see if there is a match to DNA already in the criminal database from other

agencies. While the DNA sample taken at booking is not considered evidence in the criminal case, it is invaluable in identifying who a suspect may be or in exonerating someone who is believed to be a suspect.

The most important feature of the Rapid DNA technology is that the results can be known in less than two hours, not weeks or months. With this quick turnaround, the prisoner being booked is very likely still in jail and the jail will know to hold the prisoner to face the earlier charges as well.

The use of Rapid DNA can go beyond criminal cases. Over the past year the Rapid DNA technology developed by ANDE has been used to identify family members of those who died in the horrific fires in Paradise, California. More recently, ANDE's Rapid DNA was used to help identify family members of those who died in a California boat fire.

Rapid DNA can also be extremely beneficial following natural disasters and helping to identify victims and their family members. And Rapid DNA has been used with the discovery of mass graves and finding if there are any surviving family members.

Though the Oklahoma Bureau

of Investigation (OSBI) has yet to embrace this new technology to address the extreme backlog of sexual assault and rape kits, the State of Kentucky has done so with amazingly fast success.

To support Tulsa County's implementation of Rapid DNA, the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office has recently awarded a \$50,000 grant to begin the implementation. The Sheriff is also

allocating funds from the jail budget to support the first years set up. ANDE will also provide Tulsa County with a free week of intensive training on the use of the Rapid DNA technology.

Tulsa County is on the cutting edge of using the latest technology to deliver enhanced public safety, not only to the citizens of Tulsa County but to victims of crimes committed in other states.



**NATIVE AMERICAN DAY:** The City of Tulsa celebrated Native American Day Oct. 14 at Guthrie Green. The date is shared with Columbus Day nationally.