

Vermont AFIS

By Von Labare, AFIS Administrator

The AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) was acquired from Printrak, a Motorola Company, through a Federal Grant several years ago. It is a tri-state system with

Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. The Host Site is in Concord, NH. There are workstations, latent stations, and livescans throughout the three states. The system is known as Tri-State-AFIS (TSA).

Bennington County Sheriff's Office was the recipient of the eighth Livescan machine installed in the State of Vermont.

The eight locations and site administrators are:

Bennington County Sheriff's Dept.

Sheriff Gary Forrest
Deputy Chad Schmidt
802-442-4900

Burlington Police Department

Detective John Yustin
Detective James Mueller
802-658-2704

Hartford Police Department

David E. Rich, Support Serv. Capt.
802-295-9425

Rutland Police Department

Detective Corporal Chris Kiefer
802-773-1848

St. Johnsbury Police Department

Officer Gilbert Roberts
802-748-2314

Swanton Police Department

Chief Michael McCarthy
802-868-4100

Washington County Sheriff's Dept.

Deputy Sheriff Bruce McClure
802-223-3001

Windham County Sheriff

John Melvin
802-365-4944

Vermont Crime Information Center

Von Labare, AFIS Administrator
802-241-5225



Although Vermont is increasingly using the livescans for criminal arrests the bulk of the activity is for job applicants and prospective adoptions. Applicant images are not stored in a database in Vermont or at the FBI. When a search of the records in Vermont and the FBI has been completed the civilian applicant card is destroyed.

The livescan machine makes taking fingerprints cleaner, faster and more efficient. It allows for positive

Sgt. James Tarbell of the Rutland City Police Department fingerprints Michelle L. Racette, who is going to be the assistant librarian at the Lothrop School in Pittsford.

THE INFORMER

identification within minutes if a subject's prints are already in the TSA database.

Fingerprints and mug shots are taken at one of the livescan sites and electronically submitted to the Vermont workstation. At the same time, a search is completed through the TSA at the host site and results are returned electronically to the livescan within minutes. The AFIS operator at the workstation gets the same information and verifies the identification and notifies the livescan operator.

The subject's SID number is also returned to the livescan operator and queries can be made of VCHIP and III. In addition to the criminal history, information on arrest warrants, relief from abuse orders and sex offender registrants are available within minutes.

Criminals are notorious for using false names, dates of births, and social security numbers. VCHIP records indicate that 144 individuals have real person aliases. That means these individuals use real people identities (identification fraud). They have been arrested under both names but fingerprint identification reveals their true identity.

It is anticipated that Vermont will be sending fingerprint cards electronically to the FBI in 2005. A national check will be completed within hours. Today's hard copy mail policy takes weeks and sometimes months for a response. On specific cases we are allowed to request expedite service.

The science of fingerprinting constitutes the only unchangeable and infallible means of positive identification. Because of these unique and unchanging patterns of ridge detail on each individual's fingers, law enforcement agencies throughout the world have established fingerprint comparison as the universal method of verifying identification and ensuring the integrity of criminal record systems. When other forms of identification are employed such as name and date of birth, positive identification is no longer ensured since individuals can readily assume different identities by giving aliases or by proffering falsified documents.

The use of aliases by defendants is encouraged when fingerprints are not the basis for positive identification. When the defendant assumes the name of another person, there can be serious repercussions for an innocent citizen. It is possible for a person to be arrested, disqualified from employment, or barred from purchasing a firearm just because the criminal has assumed the citizen's identity.

With the use of AFIS Vermont Crime Information Center has made numerous positive identifications of subjects who used false names and/or dates of birth trying to beat the system. Many of these cases have resulted in additional charges of false impersonation and additional arrests.

It is interesting to note that one subject had five different records in VCHIP and was last arrested in 1998. In 2002 he was arrested and fingerprinted and the prints hit with previous arrests. As a result of the AFIS system we could identify the subject and combine the records. The automated system works but taking fingerprints is imperative.

VCHIP records store hundreds of alias names. The following table shows aliases statistics:

NUMBER OF ALIASES	NUMBER OF DEFENDANTS
1	20,263
2	4,994
3	1,640
4	553
5 - 9	611
10 - 19	95
20 - 29	7
30 or more	6

Sixty-two (62) aliases is the maximum number of documented aliases associated with a single defendant.

Analysis shows that **14.5% of defendants on file have one or more documented aliases.** Analysis includes only name aliases and not date of birth aliases.

VERMONT CRIME INFORMATION CENTER

CRIMINAL RECORD DATA QUALITY ISSUES

ISSUE ONE: ALIASES

Actual events from our files ...

- A subject was arrested for possession of heroin in southern Vermont. A record check was run based on the defendant's driver's license. There was no record on file for the subject -- he appeared to be a first-time offender. A subsequent fingerprint comparison revealed that the subject was actually a major drug dealer from Massachusetts who was bringing up to 800 bags of heroin in a trip to Vermont. He also had several prior convictions in Massachusetts.

- A woman cited in a Central Vermont store for shoplifting identified herself to police as Mary Johnson (name changed for confidentiality). When she failed to appear for arraignment a warrant was issued for Johnson's arrest. Ms. Johnson subsequently called the police for assistance and was surprised to learn there was a warrant for her arrest. She was subsequently taken into custody. At the arraignment the officer who issued the original citation told the court that the Mary Johnson who was now in the courtroom was NOT the woman he had cited. The judge in the case mentioned that if the real alleged shoplifter is identified her use of Johnson's identity could be used as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

ISSUE TWO: IDENTITY FRAUD

Documented identity fraud was found in 144 cases where a defendant has established a criminal record using an innocent person's name.

RECORD QUALITY IS ASSURED WHEN SUBJECTS ARE POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED THROUGH FINGERPRINTING.

The mission statement of the Iden-

The reality of identity fraud ...

I just found out that my sister is using my name whenever she gets arrested. I know that she has been arrested three times in the Northern Vermont area for drug crimes. How can I clear my name?

tification Section at VCIC is to provide criminal justice agencies and employers with accurate, timely criminal history information in order to foster sound decision making and thereby ensure the safety and protection of all citizens. We accomplish this mission by analyzing fingerprints and arrest data to:

1. positively identify criminal defendants
2. enhance accuracy, completeness and timeliness of Vermont and FBI criminal records
3. maintain a database for forensic investigation

We strive to install in criminal justice professionals a commitment to qualify fingerprinting and arrest data through a program of training and feedback.

The Latent Fingerprint Unit is a section within the Vermont Forensic Laboratory (VFL) responsible for latent print processing and comparison. Jennifer Hannaford, latent examiner, reports: This section was vacant for approximately a year and a half until the acquisition of two examiners, Jennifer Hannaford and Rachel Lemery. The Latent Fingerprint Unit was re-opened for service to all law enforcement agencies in January 2003.

To ready the section for casework, examiners spent many hours in order to determine the status and priority of cases that remained in the laboratory for processing. Additionally, new protocols were written and implemented to include current technology in the field and to meet standards outlined by the American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD). The

Vermont Forensic Laboratory is accredited by ASCLD. As the section progressed, the backlog decreased and the examiner's use of the AFIS database began to increase.

From the latent fingerprint perspective, the AFIS database is used for the search of unidentified latents without suspects for comparison. The latents are searched against the existing ten print images from Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are housed in the system. This is called a forward search. The unit has had three forward search hits since reopening for service. Detective John Yustin, Burlington Police Department recently had a hit.

Vermont AFIS is cooperating with law enforcement agencies in the State and any latent examiner who has had proper training is encouraged to use the system and enter latents. At this time Burlington and Middlebury Police Departments and Washington County Sheriff Department have trained officers entering latents.

The database also includes an unidentified latent file (ULF) consisting of entered latents that were not identified upon the initial search of the system. The ULF allows for future comparisons of the latent against new tenprint case entries in the AFIS database. This is called a reverse search. The unit has had one reverse search hit since reopening for service.

The AFIS system is only one aspect of the latent fingerprint unit; however it is an important one. It provides the examiner and investigators with an additional search tool, where without it; the case might otherwise reach a dead end. The unit hopes to report on more positive hits through AFIS in the future. We look forward to developing a stronger section with quality service in an efficient manner. We plan to strengthen communication and working relationships with our counterparts throughout the New England fingerprint community. □

If you have and questions regarding AFIS, fingerprinting in general, or fingerprint training, please do not hesitate to contact Von Labare, Supervisor, Identification Section, Vermont Crime Information Center at 802-241-5225 or email vlabare@dps.state.vt.us.