



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Note: Audio comments from U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves regarding this news release will be available for broadcast in MP3 format at 4 p.m. today on the district's Website at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

REGIONAL COMPUTER FORENSICS LAB ENHANCES FOCUS ON COMPUTER CRIMES

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, participated in the grand opening ceremony of the Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory today.

“This laboratory brings the United States Attorney’s Office one step closer to being a national leader in the prosecution of computer crimes,” Graves said, following the event.

The Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory has been in the planning stages since October 2000.

“The new facility and our newly created Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit now will partner in the investigation and prosecution of several different types of computer crimes in the region,” Graves said. The computer forensics laboratory is located at 4150 N. Mulberry, in Kansas City.

“This state-of-the-art facility will bring technology and the prosecution of computer crimes together in a way that agencies in our area have never seen before today,” said Graves, who serves on the U.S. Department of Justice’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Working Group. “The lab will provide many new tools to help us in our fight against computer crimes, which is our top local priority.”

The computer forensics laboratory will be used in the prosecution of child pornography cases, computer hacking cases, cyber-trespassing cases, copyright infringement cases and identity theft cases, Graves said.

“We will see federal, state and local agencies working together to fight computer crimes so that these types of criminals are kept from hurting our children, families and community, Graves said.”

“This facility will provide additional cutting-edge resources for investigators and prosecutors to obtain new evidence on computer crime cases that we have not had access to in the past,” Graves said. “Essentially, the forensic analysis of these types of crimes will lead us to the cyber-equivalent of finger prints left on criminals’ computer hard drives.”

On Oct. 10, 2002, Graves announced the creation of the new Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit, which has been successful in prosecuting a steady case load of child exploitation cases. The Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit aggressively pursues those who use the Internet to sexually coerce or entice children and those who possess, produce or distribute child pornography. The unit also handles computer intrusions (“hacking”), intellectual property offenses and Internet fraud cases.

The Computer Crimes and Child Exploitation Unit will make full use of this new computer forensics laboratory, which will employ 14 full-time computer examiners making it the premier computer forensics lab in the Midwest, Graves said. Not only will the investigators extract evidence, but the lab will also train law enforcement officers and prosecutors so that they better understand how to seize and present evidence.

The Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory’s executive board is comprised of United States Attorney Todd P. Graves, the United States Attorney for the District of Kansas, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Johnson County, Kan., Sheriff’s Office, The Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Lawrence, Kan., Police Department, the Lenexa, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri Highway Patrol, and the Overland Park, Kan., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow