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DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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DNA TECHNOLOGY GETS CREDIT FOR CRIME RATE IMPACT

The Denver District Attorney and partners in the Denver Police Department are applauding innovative DNA work as an important crime-fighting tool that has helped reduce crime in Denver.

Denver's Burglary DNA Project, a joint project with the Denver Police Department's Crime Laboratory, Denver police detectives and the Denver DA's Office, has contributed to significant reductions in burglary and motor vehicle theft over the last year.

In early 2006, with funding from the National Institute of Justice, the Denver Police Department began collecting DNA evidence at burglaries and motor vehicle thefts. This is dedicated work by patrol agents at the scene. The DPD Crime Laboratory then develops DNA profiles from this evidence and uploads these profiles to the CODIS databank. Denver police detectives then use CODIS hits to further their investigation. 86 cases have been filed as the result of CODIS hits that would otherwise have gone unsolved.

The impact is huge when considering that burglary is a high volume crime and an average burglar may commit some 140 burglaries a year. DNA evidence not only helps identify the burglar, it helps ensure a successful conviction. The Burglary DNA Project has shown that having DNA evidence is also resulting in quicker guilty pleas and longer prison sentences.

The grant funding for this project will continue through the end of May 2007, with a goal of 500 cases. Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey says he is concerned about what happens when federal funding ends. "This program is catching professional, prolific burglars and is having a tremendously positive impact on reducing property crime. We need to find the funds to keep up this good work," Morrissey said. He has pledged to seek out future funding sources.