



The Center For

Law Enforcement Technology, Training, & Research

Provider of the Florida Integrated Network for Data Exchange & Retrieval



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2008

INSIDE THIS AUGUST ISSUE:

- LETTR's Open House 1
- Introducing the LETTR Board 1
- Welcome New Members 2
- Notes from the Consortium Meeting 2
- Query Groups 3
- Analyst Workshop, Sept. 16th 3
- Behind the Scenes 3

LETTR's Open House

In conjunction with this month's Law Enforcement Data Sharing Consortium meeting, the Center for Law Enforcement Technology, Training, & Research (LETTR) held an open house in order to showcase its new office space and to provide an opportunity for Consortium members to socialize with one another. The consortium meeting and open house event was an enormous success, with over 70 attendees representing 34 different law enforcement agencies from around the state. The event

began with a regularly scheduled consortium meeting. During the meeting, Detective Jim McClure (LETTR's Program Director and the Consortium's Chair), updated the agency representatives on LETTR, FINDER, and the Law Enforcement Data Sharing Consortium. Several dignitaries then addressed the gathering, including LETTR Board member Vice Admiral Al Harms and US Congressman Tom Feeney. Following the meeting, UCF and LETTR hosted an open house, providing lunch and

presenting the new LETTR office to the attendees. The event marked another successful gathering of the Consortium and highlighted the growth of this data sharing project in Florida.



Congressman Tom Feeney addresses the Consortium

Meeting LETTR's Board of Directors

Law enforcement is a passion that has driven Sheriff Donald Eslinger for 30 years. In 1978, Sheriff Eslinger began his career as a dispatcher with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and, from there, he advanced through the ranks as a Patrol Deputy, Criminal Investigator, Special Operations Investigator, Watch Commander, and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team Leader. Sheriff Eslinger's service also included two tours with the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as a Task Force Agent, from which he returned to serve as Commander of the City/County

Investigative Bureau. Eslinger had achieved the rank of Major when, in 1991, Florida's Governor appointed him to the Office of the Sheriff; Eslinger was then elected to the Office in 1992, and re-elected in 1996, 2000, and 2004. Sheriff Eslinger is also involved in a wide variety of community programs and professional associations. He is a past-President of the Florida Sheriffs Association; served as a member of the National Sheriffs' Association Board of Directors; and is a former Commissioner for the Commission on Accreditation For Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). "I have been in-

involved with law enforcement for 30 years," says Sheriff Eslinger. "I've grown up in law enforcement and I've seen the progression and advancement in the field." This unique understanding is what drew Sheriff Eslinger to the FINDER project. "We've been involved with FINDER since the beginning." Indeed, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office was one of the five original agencies that helped to start the data sharing initiative in 2002. "We were an early supporter of FINDER because I believe that information is power; that
(continued on page 2)

LETTR
12201 Research Parkway
Suite 223
Orlando, FL 32826
Phone: 407-882-1590



LETTR Board Member: Sheriff Eslinger

information is an absolute necessity in law enforcement," states Sheriff Eslinger. "Crime is trans-jurisdictional and when agencies can collaborate and share information, it can significantly aid in solving crimes." Further, according to Sheriff Eslinger, technology has advanced, and using technology to share crime information can enhance an agency's method of operation. With his strong law enforcement background and his support of FINDER, it was natural that Sheriff Eslinger agreed

to serve on the Board of Directors for the Center for Law Enforcement Technology, Training, & Research (LETTR). Sheriff Eslinger asserts that his greatest contribution to the LETTR Board is his understanding of the intricacies of law enforcement. "I believe that I am a proven administrator and a seasoned practitioner in law enforcement; I can contribute to LETTR with those unique law enforcement perspectives." Undeniably, the Sheriff provides important and valuable insights regarding

the direction of LETTR. Sheriff Eslinger's vision for LETTR includes the continued growth of FINDER. "I would like to see all Florida agencies participating in this information sharing; I would like to see state agencies and federal agencies participating as well." Sheriff Eslinger has dedicated himself to law enforcement, providing his service and developing a distinctive expertise; he is certainly a valued and important member for LETTR's Board of Directors.

Welcome Our Newest Member Agencies

We'd like to welcome six new agencies that began to share data this month via the FINDER system. Joining the data sharing initiative are the Oakland Police Department, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, Melbourne Village Police Department, Sebastian Police Department, Indian

River County Sheriff's Office, and Umatilla Police Department. These six agencies are among the growing list of Florida agencies that are using FINDER to share crime information. To date, 110 agencies across the state are members of the Law Enforcement Data Sharing Con-

sortium and are sharing data with FINDER. Combined, these member law enforcement agencies service nearly 75% of Florida's population. The addition of these six new agencies illustrates the continued growth of the project and the overall success of FINDER.

To view the minutes from the Law Enforcement Data Sharing Consortium Meeting, visit the LETTR website at www.lettr.org



Notes from the Consortium Meeting

At this month's Law Enforcement Data Sharing Consortium meeting, several important items of business were discussed. The first included details regarding a critical update installation; each agency with a FINDER server must install this update in order to be current with FINDER 4.0. A technical associate will be contacting each agency to schedule this 5-minute installation. All agencies must have this update completed by September 30th. A second business item

involved Gun Records and how they are coded by Pawn Shops. Per FINDER's privacy policy and Florida law, no gun records are included in the FINDER data. Currently, some pawn shops are coding firearms as "articles," meaning that these records are making their way into FINDER. The Consortium discussed how best to avoid this issue. Another discussion involved the maintenance of the FINDER servers by agencies. In order for FINDER to work effectively, agencies

must be cognitive of the fact that, if their FINDER servers goes off-line (ie: it's been turned-off), their agency will appear as "unavailable" to other agencies. Agencies should make sure that their servers are online. Finally, members were asked to continue using the "success tagging" feature in FINDER; success tagging is used to illustrate FINDER success, especially when seeking funding opportunities for the project. View the full minutes at the www.lettr.org website.

Building Your Own Query Group

A unique option in the FINDER system is that of “agency groups.” This option allows the users to establish personalized groupings of agencies that they can query, rather than using the “default” query option, which queries every FINDER agency statewide. An “agency group,” once established by the user, will be retained in the FINDER system and can be used for any future queries. A specifically designed user group is exclusive for the user who developed it and is visible to that user

only. The benefit of establishing an agency group is that the user can have immediate access to certain agencies that he or she may regularly query. To create your own agency query group, click on the “My Account” link on the main screen. This will open the “User Control Panel” screen. From here, click on the “Agency Groups” link. This will display the “User Agency Groups” screen; type a unique group name in the “Add Group” field and then click on the “Add”

button. Your group name will then be displayed in the “Groups” field. With the group’s name highlighted, start clicking the agencies you wish to add to this group. Once done, click on the “Save” button to save your selected agencies to this group. Your specialized group(s) will now be displayed below the “Default” group on the main FINDER query page. In FINDER, you can create multiple query groups, each containing various combinations of agencies.



LETTR hosting a Crime Analyst Workshop

The Center for Law Enforcement Technology, Training, & Research (LETTR) will be hosting a Crime Analyst Workshop in Orlando on September 16th, from 9:00am-4:00pm. This is a free workshop organized in conjunction with the Florida Crime and Intelligence Analysts Association (FCIAA). The primary objective of this workshop is to provide a forum where Florida’s crime,

intelligence, and investigative analysts can conduct a needs assessment with regard to technology-based analytical tools. All Florida analysts, as well as state and federal analysts, are welcome to attend to the workshop. This workshop will use an anonymous survey followed by both large and small-group sessions (facilitated by University of Central Florida faculty and research associates) to

begin identifying analysts’ technological needs. In addition, attendees will have the option to attend an advanced FINDER training session. Seating is limited; those interested are required to reserve their spot by emailing Analyst@lettr.org. Please include your name, agency affiliation and current position, and contact information. For more information, visit the www.lettr.org website.

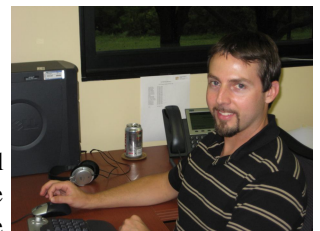
LETTR will be hosting a Crime Analyst Workshop in Orlando on September 16th.

Behind the Scenes: Brad Mundt

Brad Mundt has been working with the FINDER project since 2003; he was one of the earliest programmers to work on the data sharing application and has since become an important asset to the programming team. Brad began working on the FINDER project after being introduced to the law enforcement data sharing concept by a colleague. To Brad, the greatest benefit of FINDER to law enforcement is the unique distribute architecture. “The system is fairly straight forward, expandable, low cost, federated, and it

works! Agencies keep control of their data on their servers, participate in FINDER at their discretion, and keep using all of their existing IT infrastructure. FINDER is a supplementary tool that we make compatible with the agency’s system. It’s another tool that law enforcement can use to solve crimes.” Along with his efforts with FINDER, Brad has also worked on various other law enforcement projects, including the Altamonte Springs Police Department Critical Response and Incident Management Sys-

tem (CRIMS) and the National Center for Forensic Science (NCFS) Digital Evidence Markup Language (DEML) software. Due to his experience, Brad feels that his greatest contribution to FINDER is his ability to troubleshoot any programming or networking issues and to assist the law enforcement clients when needed. When asked what he enjoys most about working for FINDER, Brad states that “it’s nice to know that you’re working on something important that can make a real difference to others.”





LETTR

**12201 Research Parkway
Suite 223
Orlando, Florida 32826
407-882-1590**

The Center for Law Enforcement Technology, Training, & Research (LETTR) is a Florida, not-for-profit corporation. LETTR was formed in September 2007 by the University of Central Florida and members of the Florida Law Enforcement Data Sharing Consortium to consolidate the intellectual property and other resources associated with FINDER, the Florida Integrated Network for Data Exchange and Retrieval. FINDER is a set of computer applications that enable automated information sharing between police agencies.



**For comments or story suggestions, please
contact this newsletter's creator and author,
Dr. Jennifer Sumner, at
JSumner@mail.ucf.edu**