

The Criminal Justice Information Network Governing Board: A Report to the General Assembly

Contents in Response to Legislative Request:

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 - expenses incurred;
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 - coordination and cooperation of State and local agencies
- ◆ Implementation of the mobile data network system, including:
 - funds spent on the system; and
 - long-term costs of statewide implementation

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN AND COST ANALYSIS

At their initial meeting, the CJIN governing Board agreed upon the following strategic plan: first, identify the current status of the various criminal justice information systems in the state; second, review the recommendations of the CJIN study, conducted by Price Waterhouse in 1995; and third, establish a revised and updated plan of action. This three-step process facilitates the considerable learning curve of the Board members and provides a consensus roadmap for immediate and future implementation steps. Once this process has been completed, the Governing Board will be better equipped to make recommendations concerning logistic, administrative, and funding requirements of CJIN implementation.

To provide a long-term cost analysis, it is critical to first evaluate the expenditures made since the CJIN Study was completed. Two key areas of CJIN have developed significantly over the last two years: the Statewide automated fingerprint identification system (SAFIS and the Mobile Data Network system (discussed in a later section).

In most parts of the state, the positive identification of offenders can take several weeks, and it is possible that the offender will see a magistrate, be booked into jail and/or released on bond, be charged by the district attorney, meet with a public defender, and be through a first appearance in district court before information on previous criminal offenses is received.

The SBI's Division of Criminal Information (DCI) has responded to this problem, and North Carolina's SAFIS program, recognized as one of the best in the country, continues to be upgraded to expand the capabilities of the state's centralized automated fingerprint repository. At least 22 counties are now utilizing devices that

capture and digitize fingerprint impressions and criminal justice agencies in these counties can now electronically submit fingerprint impressions directly to DCI, producing a significant reduction in time and money spent on this process. Recognizing the superior value of capturing, submitting, and exchanging digitized fingerprints over manually submitting prints by mail (the CJIN Study Committee recommended positive offender identification in two hours or less), the SBI has taken a proactive role in preparing for the eventual implementation of the future statewide automated fingerprint system. This agency recently received a sizeable federal grant to continue implementing this technology, to establish a back-up SAFIS to expand the storage capacity of the repository, and to establish electronic connectivity to the FBI's national AFIS.

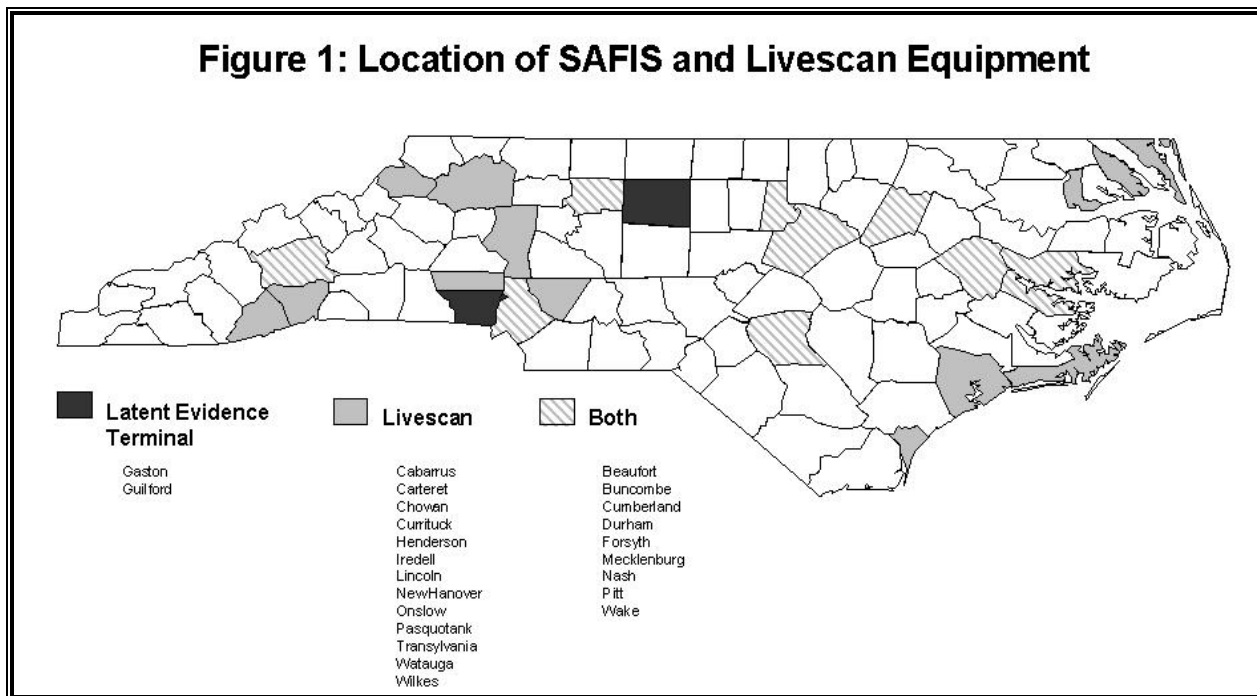


Figure 1 illustrates the counties that are in the process of or have been participating in the SAFIS. The figure indicates whether a county has a SAFIS latent evidence terminal, livescan device, or both a latent evidence terminal and a livescan. A livescan terminal allows for the capture and remote submission of livescan fingerprints cards to the SBI's SAFIS; whereas, a SAFIS latent evidence terminal allows for the remote search and verification of unsolved latent prints against the SBI's AFIS database. The counties with SAFIS-compatible livescans are already in the position to comply with the CJIN Study recommendation of having at least one livescan in each county capable of electronic submissions to DCI. The costs for these systems have come from local and federal sources.

Financial impact of a system that utilizes the most current technology is a major concern surrounding the development of this statewide information network. This is most pronounced among smaller agencies which are either completely unautomated or are in the early stages of incorporating information systems technology into the operations. The CJIN endeavor cannot succeed unless all local agencies, both large and small, are technologically compatible and capable of communicating and exchanging data in an automated fashion. Given the importance of making livescan technology more widely available, Governor Hunt's

budget includes \$2,000,000 to continue the development of the Criminal Justice Information Network, particularly in the area of the SAFIS project.

In part, state and local support for and commitment to CJIN will leverage federal block grant money for information technology throughout the state. The Information Systems Committee of the Governor's Crime Commission is committed to the CJIN project, and has diligently attempted to address the concerns of smaller agencies and reduce the financial and technological impediments that these agencies may encounter as they attempt to connect to a statewide criminal justice information network. Through this committee, over \$2 million Drug Control and System Improvement (DCSI) grant dollars has been awarded to more than 40 small law enforcement agencies during the past three years. These funds have enabled these agencies to acquire computers for either the first time or to upgrade their existing information systems. Numerous agencies have installed and implemented incident based crime reporting software and have used these grant funds to progress from paper based to automated record keeping systems that will place them in a more advantageous position for connectivity to CJIN as it continues to develop.

The CJIN Governing Board encourages the General Assembly to recognize that CJIN is a long-term investment, and that state and local agencies already are spending considerable funds on the issues addressed in the initial CJIN Study recommendations. The option, therefore, is not whether money will be spent on the criminal justice system, but whether the expenditures will be targeted, coordinated, and designed for the maximum benefit of users statewide. Delays in the implementation of the CJIN initiatives will only add to the fragmentation of the system, and make future connections even more difficult.

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**ORGANIZATION,
OPERATIONS, AND
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EXPENSES INCURRED

To date, \$1,200 has been spent on travel expenses for Board members; leaving a total balance of \$98,750 for the operations of the Governing Board. No expenditures have been made toward the data sharing standards project. The \$300,000 will be used to supplement and match a federal grant awarded this year from the Governor's Crime Commission. Only a small amount of money has been spent up to this point, due in part to the length of time needed to complete the Governing Board appointments. To date, all of the staffing functions have been conducted on a volunteer basis by state employees from CJIN affiliated agencies.

PERMANENT STAFFING NEEDS

In future CJIN Governing Board meetings, specific recommendations for permanent staffing will be considered, but at the very least, it is anticipated that an Executive Director will be needed to direct Governing Board meetings, coordinate and conduct field research, prepare legislative reports, write grants, conduct public awareness campaigns, provide technical assistance to local agencies, and any other duties as directed by the Governing Board.

The Governing Board will make its final recommendations for permanent staffing needs during the second session of the 1997 General Assembly.

DATA SHARING STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The CJIN Governing Board has just received a grant through the Information Systems Committee of the Governor's Crime Commission for \$559,860 to supplement the Data Sharing Standards Development Project funds provided by the North Carolina General Assembly last year.

A CJIN Governing Board committee comprised of representatives from local and state criminal justice agencies will be formed for data sharing standards development. The committee will establish a phased approach to compiling a data element dictionary and will solicit input from all concerned agencies. For adoption of the standards, participants in each phase must not only feel included, they must have confidence in the dictionary and recognize and understand the benefits that their organization will receive.

Once the committee is formed, a project manager and necessary staff will be retained to manage the progress of the data sharing standards project and to plan and facilitate the meetings of the committee. A consultant will be utilized to provide practical expertise and experience in the process of compiling a data dictionary and performance of the subsequent data audits that are necessary to measure effectiveness of processes, timeliness of disposition entry, and compliance of local agencies to reporting requirements. In order to avoid the view that data quality checks are a state mandate, local systems personnel will not only augment data sharing with exposure to other systems, but will drive the audit process.

This project forms the base from which all users will connect to CJIN. Today's telecommunications technology allows users to access disparate databases, but if the elements in these databases are not common, the information cannot be fully utilized by users from outside agencies. The subsequent stages of CJIN are dependent upon successful implementation of statewide standards. Dependent upon these standards are: Statewide Automated Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS); Statewide Integrated Criminal History; Magistrate System; Statewide Identification Index; Statewide Warrant System; Courtroom Automation; and Statewide Juvenile Case Management System.

Projects dependent upon successful implementation of data standards include:

*SAFIS;
Statewide Integrated Criminal History;
Magistrate System;
State Identification Index;
Statewide Warrant System;
Courtroom Automation; and
Statewide Juvenile Case Management System*

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION OF STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

The data standardization is not easy, but benefits to the CJIN community outweigh all difficulties. To ensure and promote these benefits, the standardization committee will involve local agencies as a major contributor to the development of the data dictionary and audit procedures. The CJIN Governing Board believes that if the guidelines come from throughout the state and that standards have been cooperatively developed, the level of participation among local agencies will remain enthusiastic and supportive.

FUNDS SPENT ON THE SYSTEM

The State Highway patrol has utilized a logical, phased-in approach as its method of deployment for expanding the Criminal Justice Information Network – Mobile Data Network (CJIN-MDN). A central site to house the CJIN-MDN message switch, radio network controller and telecommunication peripherals has been established at the State Highway Patrol Information Management Unit. This facility is located on state government property jointly occupied by the State Highway Patrol and State Bureau of Investigation in Raleigh, NC. The Patrol utilizes technical and logistical assistance from the Division of Criminal Information for network interface requirements to databases located at the Division of Criminal Information, National Crime Information Center, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Correction, Division of Motor Vehicles, State Information Processing Service, and local government computer assisted dispatch systems.

Full statewide coverage has begun with initial coverage on Interstate 85 and Interstate 95 from South Carolina to the Virginia border. CJIN-MDN Phase One, funded through state appropriations and a federal grant (Drug Control and System Improvements – Byrne Grant #130-196-15B-D038) from the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission, provides an approximate 20 mile envelope around the two interstate highways and will provide mobile data access to approximately 41% of the state’s population base. The total amount spent on Phase I was \$2.5 million.

The initial phases of CJIN-MDN have been built on the concept of “Shared Resources”. Costs to all participating agencies are reduced by simply sharing available resources that constitute the network. In formulating partnerships, the State Highway Patrol shares resources such as engineering support, currently licensed 800MHz frequencies (spectrum), a premier microwave communication system, and network administrative responsibilities with local government agencies in return for their sharing of resources such as tower sites, base station controllers, leased telecommunications lines, digital sending units, and 800 MHz RF infrastructures that are currently in operation. A standard Memorandum of Agreement is used to validate the sharing of resources, provides an itemized list of resources shared with the network, and identifies which agency is providing them.

LONG-TERM COSTS OF STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

CJIN-MDN Phase Two, as proposed, will be funded through state appropriations and a federal grant (Drug Control and System Improvements – Byrne Grant # 130- 1 –97 - 15B-D-080) from the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission. It will provide mobile data access to an additional 36% of the state’s population base and will cost \$3.0 million.

CJIN-MDN Phase One and Two combined will impact 77% of North Carolina’s population base and provide mobile data coverage to approximately 71% of North Carolina’s geographical area.

Subsequent Phases Three, Four, and Five will continue the expansion CJIN-MDN until a statewide communications blanket provides access for all criminal justice agencies. It is projected that these remaining three phases will cost \$7.8 million.

To insure full and long term satisfaction, the CJIN-MDN mobile data technology provides North Carolina with a complete solution to current requirements and provides a data communications road map that will grow with the state’s changing needs well into the next century. The involvement of the public safety community is essential to the success of CJIN-MDN. The integrated mobile data network will provide services to criminal justice agencies, regardless of size. It provides a method or interagency networking and data communications utilizing advanced technology, while sharing basic resources.