Georgia Bureau of Investigation
November Monthly Report
FY2024

Presented to the Board of Public Safety
No meeting held in January 2024

Chris Hosey
Director

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Noteworthy Cases & Operational Support

- Region 1 - Calhoun Field Office – On Wednesday, December 6, 2023, Robert Allen Mowry, a 53-year-old man from Tullahoma, TN was convicted by a Walker County, GA jury for the 1994 murder of James Richard Harris, a 54-year-old man from Chickamauga, GA. GBI agents, the Walker County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), and the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office worked relentlessly to seek answers and pursue justice. Suspect and witness interviews, persistent investigative acts, DNA testing, and more made this conviction possible after nearly 29 years.

  On December 22, 1994, a neighbor found James Harris deceased in his driveway in Chickamauga. Mr. Harris had been struck in the back of the head and strangled to death during an apparent robbery. There were signs of a struggle and a large amount of blood found at the crime scene; however, in 1994, the state crime lab's forensic analysis capabilities on blood-stained items recovered from the scene were limited. Few leads materialized over the years despite diligent investigative efforts by the WCSO and the GBI.

  In 2005, the GBI Crime Lab was asked to re-analyze items found at the crime scene. Blood stains on the jeans worn by Mr. Harris, along with stains from a bloody tissue located near the body were submitted for DNA analysis, and were determined to be from a single individual, and not a match to Mr. Harris. Multiple individuals were contacted by the WCSO and the GBI over the years for the purpose of providing a DNA sample to compare against the DNA from the jeans and tissue - no matches were found.

  In 2009, a tip received by law enforcement via phone identified the suspect in the murder as a person named "Allen". The WCSO and GBI located an individual who worked with Mr. Harris at Miller Industries in Ooltewah named Robert Allen Mowry who had never previously been contacted in the investigation. Further investigation of Mowry revealed that he had arrived at work late on the date Mr. Harris was murdered, and that he had been seen with a black eye in the days following the murder.

  In April 2018, a GBI Agent contacted Mowry by phone and asked to speak to him about Mr. Harris' murder. Mowry replied he had already spoken to law enforcement about the case, which the GBI Agent determined to be untrue. The Agent went to Mowry's home in August 2019 to interview Mowry and received an angry phone call from Mowry in response to the visit. When asked to submit a DNA sample, as others had voluntarily done over the years, Mowry replied that he did not believe in DNA or the results from DNA. Agents with the GBI, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, WCSO, and Tullahoma Police Department coordinated surveillance efforts to obtain Mowry's DNA. During their surveillance, officers observed Mowry smoking cigarettes outside his home. Officers conducted a trash pull after Mowry had taken his garbage can to the street and obtained a large number of cigarette butts from the can. The cigarette butts were submitted to the GBI Crime Lab for DNA comparison analysis against the blood from the jeans and tissue at the crime scene, and there was a match to Mowry's DNA. Upon receipt of the match results from the cigarette butts, a search warrant was obtained for Mowry's DNA, and upon comparison, there was a 1 in 3 quadrillion match to the bloody items located at the crime scene.

  On December 6, 2023, following a trial lasting seven days, Mowry was convicted of Felony Murder and immediately sentenced by a Superior Court Judge to serve the remainder of his life in the Georgia Department of Corrections. Testimony against Mowry was given by multiple forensic scientists from the GBI Crime Lab, neighbors and coworkers of James Harris, and several local law enforcement officers, as well as officers from the State of Tennessee.

- Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office (ARDEO) – On December 27, 2023, the Hall County Sheriff's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Georgia State Patrol, and the ARDEO arrested and charged Fernando Martinez, age 51, of Gainesville GA, with three counts of trafficking methamphetamine and six counts of possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. The arrest resulted from a search warrant at Pine Circle Drive, Gainesville, GA, on December 21, 2023, for his involvement in trafficking suspected methamphetamine and illegal firearms. This investigation lasted more than one year and led to the seizure of more than two pounds of suspected methamphetamine, seven firearms, and over $3,000. The street value of the seized methamphetamine is about $12,000. Martinez was booked into the Hall County Jail. This investigation is ongoing.

- Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office (ARDEO) – The White County Sheriff's Office, Habersham County Sheriff's Office, and the ARDEO conducted a multi-day operation in December 2023 that led to the arrest of three people. On December 29, 2023, Cody Lee Fendley, age 38, of Cleveland, GA, was arrested and charged with trafficking methamphetamine and possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute. Fendley was also wanted from a previous incident for aggravated assault, terroristic threats, and criminal trespass. Ronald Bafile, age 42, of Cleveland, GA, was arrested and charged with trafficking methamphetamine, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute, possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance, and fleeing and attempting to elude. Megan Bafile, age 31, of Dahlonega, GA, was arrested and charged with trafficking methamphetamine, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute, possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance, and obstruction of law enforcement. During the operation, law enforcement seized more than a pound of suspected methamphetamine, as well as suspected fentanyl and marijuana throughout White and Habersham counties. The Cleveland Police Department also assisted in apprehending one of the suspects. The total street value of the drugs was about $15,000. This investigation is ongoing.

- Metro Gang Task Force assisted the Atlanta Police Department with Operation Deep Freeze from October through December 2023, targeting criminal street gangs in high crime areas by providing intelligence support, assisting with knock & talks, and serving existing arrest warrants. Murder rates have declined by 19% in Atlanta. Operation stats include: 87 arrests (including 34 gang members), 13 gang charges, and 67 guns recovered.

- Office of Special Investigations (OSI) - Cold Case Unit (CCU) – The Coleman-Baker Act (CBA) request webform has been on the GBI website Home page since June 30, 2023. Nineteen (19) cold cases are being reviewed at this time. Six (6) were requests from designated family members and thirteen (13) were self-initiated.

- From January 1 to December 31, 2023, the GBI investigated a total of 104 Officer Involved Shootings (OIS). OIS number 104 was on December 29, 2023. GBI's Region 2 - Columbus Field Office was requested by the Spalding County Sheriff's Office. On December 29, 2023, at about 11:00 am, the Spalding County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to a welfare check on Deason Road. Upon arrival, the resident, identified as Todd Harper, age 57, fired at the responding deputies, hitting and killing Spalding County Sheriff's Sergeant Marc McIntyre, age 55. A second Deputy received non-life-threatening injuries during the incident. Harper was taken into custody after a standoff with law enforcement. Harper has been arrested and charged with murder. He was booked into the Spalding County Jail. The GBI will conduct an independent investigation. Once complete, the case file will be given to the Griffin Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Trainings and Projects

Investigative Division

- After completing 13 weeks of Basic Agent training, 26 graduates of the 2023 Special Agent School were honored at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, Georgia, on Thursday, December 21, 2023.

- One hundred forty-six (146) Special Agent applicants passed the Special Agent test and will take part in the applicant assessment scheduled for early February 2024 at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.

Personnel Matters

- During the 2023 holiday season, GBI employees filled wish lists of 31 children in foster care for the Clark's Christmas Kids program and 31 vulnerable adults for the Light Up the Holidays for a Vulnerable Georgian program.

Promotion Effective November 2023

- Kwame Bowens was promoted to the Integrated CJIS Data Center (ICDC) Supervisor in the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), effective November 1, 2023.

Facilities Update

- Macon Morgue building repairs are in progress and scheduled to be complete the first week of February.

- Mausoleum – Structural steel complete. Stone column wraps and final painting are scheduled for the end of January.

- GBI-77 New Region 1 Calhoun Office – Grading operations are on-going for the month of January.

- HQ Main Building Automation Replacement is in progress.

- HQ Fire Alarm System Replacement to begin in mid-February.

- HQ Glazing Replacement is scheduled to resume installation in early February.

GBI Employment Opportunities
FY2024

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
DOFS	61	61	61	58	60							
Scientist Positions	18	19	18	19	19							
Investigative Division	43	46	48	52	55							
Sworn Agent Positions	29	32	33	36	36							
GCIC	2	4	4	5	4							
Admin	9	8	6	5	5							

GBI Administration

Office of Privacy & Compliance/Open Records

	November 2023	Total FY 2024
Open Records Requests	453	2,244
Archives Requests	22	94

Investigative Division

Investigative Hours Expended - YTD FY2024
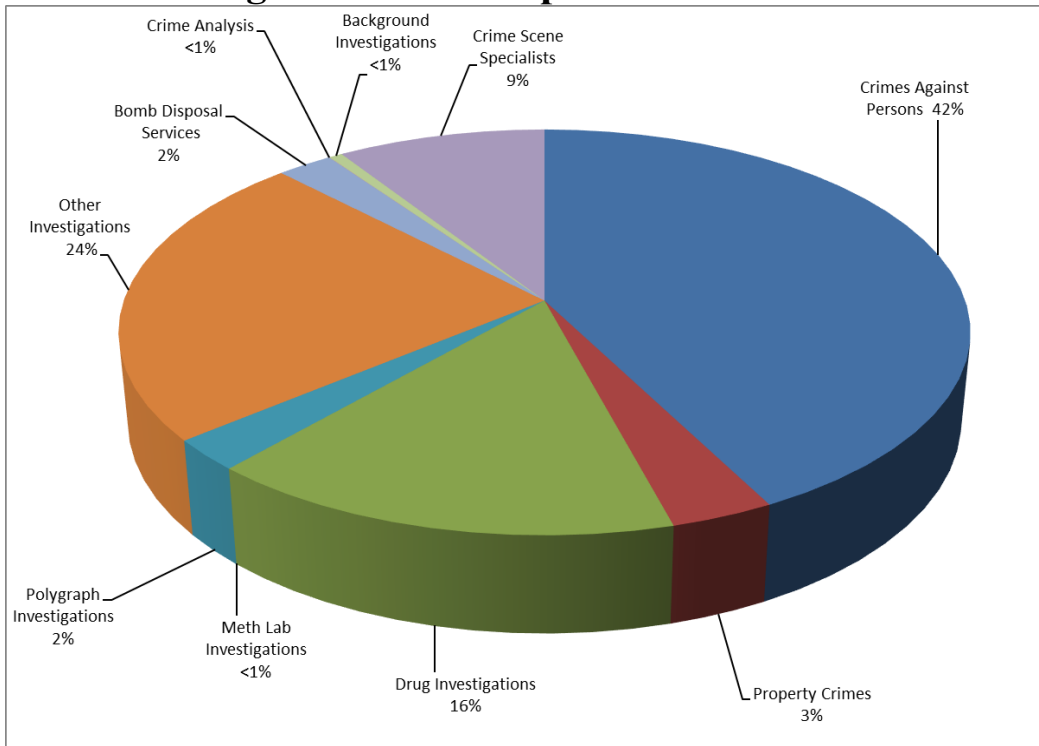
Crime Lab

Medical Examiners (includes all laboratories)

	November 2023	FY2024 YTD
Autopsies	349	1,863
Consultations	140	893
Total ME Cases Managed	**489**	**2,756**

Percentage of Cases Released in 90 days: 49.1%

Medical Examiner Activity, FY2024

Consultations 32%
Autopsies 68%
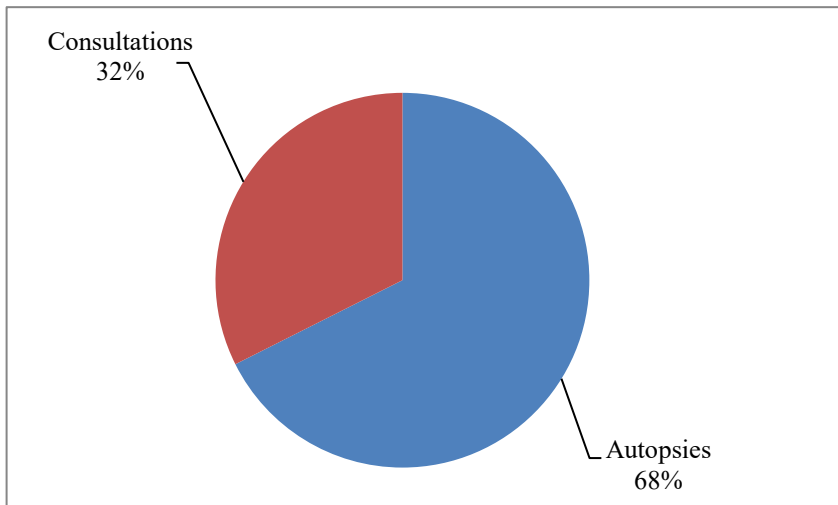
Confirmed CODIS Hits for November 2023

State Offender Hits	83
State Forensic Hits	12
National Offender Hits	21
National Forensic Hits	2
Total	118

Samples entered CODIS for November 2023 – 1,386

Profiles in CODIS

Forensic Casework Profiles	29,946
Convicted Offender Profiles	437,444
Missing Person/Unidentified Human Remain Profiles	12
Staff/QC File	634
Total	468,036

Report Turnaround for November 2023

	# Released in 45 Days	Total Released	% Released in 45 Days
Laboratory			
Headquarters - Atlanta	2,654	5,075	52%
Central Regional - Macon	3	281	1%
Coastal Regional - Savannah	343	856	40%
Eastern Regional - Augusta	318	509	63%
Northeastern Regional	1,312	1,615	81%
Southwestern Regional - Moultrie	52	120	43%
Western Regional - Columbus	46	196	24%
System-wide Totals	**4,728**	**8,652**	**55%**

Note: 65.1% Casework Reports were released within 90 days.

Report Turnaround for Year-to-Date, FY2024

	# Released in 45 Days	Total Released	% Released in 45 Days
Laboratory			
Headquarters - Atlanta	15,194	30,192	50%
Central Regional - Macon	20	490	4%
Coastal Regional - Savannah	1,825	4,625	40%
Eastern Regional - Augusta	1,921	2,951	65%
Northeastern Regional	3,104	9,319	33%
Southwestern Regional - Moultrie	225	765	29%
Western Regional - Columbus	227	1,064	21%
System-wide Totals	**22,516**	**49,406**	**46%**

Crime Lab Reports Processed for November 2023

Department	Requested	Total Released
Chemistry (includes Drug ID)	2,579	3,492
Firearms	332	275
Forensic Biology	2,553	2,086
Impressions	0	1
Latent Prints	141	134
Medical Examiners	526	489
Operations Support	0	0
Toxicology	2,575	2,586
Trace Evidence	90	78
Total	**8,796**	**9,141**

Crime Lab Reports Processed FY2024

Department	Requested	Total Released
Chemistry (includes Drug ID)	15,162	19,552
Firearms	1,868	1,405
Forensic Biology	12,057	12,706
Impressions	10	9
Latent Prints	887	801
Medical Examiners	2,811	2,756
Operations Support	0	0
Toxicology	14,015	14,424
Trace Evidence	487	509
Total	**47,297**	**52,162**

DOFS Backlog Chart – FY 2024
Unworked Reports over 30 Days Old

Discipline	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Chemistry	33,667	32,688	32,438	31,932	31,448							
Data Conversion	0	0	0	0	0							
Firearms	2,933	2,914	2,999	3,075	3,125							
Forensic Biology	3,804	3,047	2,646	1,672	2,558							
Impressions	10	12	12	12	11							
Latent Prints	85	125	89	106	178							
Misc. Services	0	0	0	0	0							
Operations Support	0	0	0	0	0							
Toxicology	1,061	981	823	865	1,072							
Trace Evidence	394	387	357	303	338							
Total	**41,954**	**40,154**	**39,364**	**37,965**	**38,730**							

MEO Backlog Chart - FY2024
(Medical Examiner data is calculated as >90 days from the date of examination in accordance with National Association of Medical Examiner accreditation standards.)

Discipline	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Medical Examiners	979	969	1,006	1,081	1,096							

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Total DOFS & MEO	**42,933**	**41,123**	**40,370**	**39,046**	**39,826**							

Georgia Crime Information Center

November 2023

NCIC SERVICES

CJIS Network Statistics

System Uptime: 100.00%
Messages Processed: 81,294,103

CJIS Operations

1. **Sex Offender Registry**

	Month	FY2024	Database Totals
Records Added	103	623	38,052

2. **Protection Order Registry**

	Month	FY2024	Database Totals
Records Added	2,473	13,805	191,445

3. **Off-Line Search Requests**

Type of Request	Month	FY2024
Administrative (Criminal Justice Agency)	10	71
Open Records	0	1
Subpoena	0	0
Media	0	0
Possible CJIS Security Violations	9	17

CJIS Audits

	Month	FY2024
CJIS Audits	18	209
Total for Audit Cycle 2022-2025		529

INFORMATION SERVICES
Criminal History Identification Services

1. Criminal Fingerprint Transactions Received

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	35,821	192,664
Submissions w/Palms	14,726	82,160
Submissions w/Photos	10,920	61,797

Transactions processed within 2 hours of receipt: 91%

2. Applicant Fingerprint Transactions Received

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	35,060	213,964

Transactions processed with 24 hours of receipt: 99%

3. Final Dispositions Received

	Month	FY2024
Local Agency	87,445	362,081
GCIC	274	2,261
TOTAL	87,719	364,342

4. Rapid Identification (Rapid ID) Transactions

	Month	FY2024
Submissions	1,321	6,852
AFIS Hits	52%	51%
NCIC Hits	53%	53%
FBI RISC Hits	14%	14%

5. Non-Criminal Justice Audits, Visits and Trainings

	Month	FY2024
In Compliance	36	148
Out of Compliance	27	81
TOTAL AUDITS	63	229
Agency Visits	10	50
Training Attendees	322	587
Trainings	5	31

6. Rap Back Activity

	Month	FY2024
Subscriptions Created	4,807	27,516
Triggering Events	694	3,470

7. Latent Print AFIS Activities

	Month	FY2024
Latent Hits	32	126

PLANS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

<u>CUSTOMER SUPPORT & TRAINING</u>

Project Description - The Customer Support Training group provides training in GCIC programs, GCIC applications, and GCIC/FBI compliance to criminal justice agencies across the State of Georgia.

CJ Training Tasks

Training Staff Tasks	Month	FY 2024
Emails	1,199	7,908
Phone Calls	302	1,831
Agency Visits	0	0
Virtual/Classroom Trainings	5	15
Individuals Trained	214	654

GBI Learning Management System (LMS)

Course	Month	FY 2024
Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database	0	65
CJIS Security Policy Awareness and Training/Awareness Statement	4,232	25,604
CJIS Network Operator Certification	1,814	9,511

<u>GEORGIA APPLICANT PROCESSING SERVICE (GAPS) PROJECT</u>

Project Description - The Information Services section of GCIC is seeking to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced vendor to provide an applicant fingerprinting solution that will electronically capture and submit applicant fingerprints to the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and provide Rap Back services. The selected vendor shall also handle receiving fingerprint search results and disseminating results to the requestor.

Monthly Update - The GAPS system is operating, and all change orders are resolved.

<u>GEORGIA LAW ENFORCEMENT MESSAGE SWITCH (GLEMS)</u>

Project Description - The message switch provides a means of communication between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Georgia, the United States, and other countries, and to take advantage of new features and advances in technology. GCIC is working on an upgrade or replacement of this system.

Monthly Update - GCIC continues to work with Datamaxx and other SOG Stakeholders to test the production connections and prepare for a 2024 first quarter deployment date.

NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY (NSOR) NOTIFICATION PROJECT

Project Description - The NSOR project will provide Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) the ability to receive NSOR responses as a part of the criminal history background check, in compliance with Federal, state, and local laws to make complete/accurate fitness determinations.

Monthly Update - The NSOR project is moving forward. The MOU was completed and the GTA-DECAL-GBI Statement of Work was signed by the GCIC Director.

RAP BACK PROJECT

Project Description - The Rap Back (RB) project will provide the ability to receive ongoing status notifications of criminal history activity reported on individuals holding positions of trust. Georgia's Rap Back System will include the retention of applicant fingerprints, the implementation of an FBI Rap Back Subscription on such prints, and the creation of a validation process for authorized entities to manage such subscriptions. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) is requesting proposals for the Georgia Applicant Processing Service (GAPS) with the Federal Rap Back Subscription Service. The objective of this procurement is to obtain the services of a qualified and experienced vendor to provide real-time, end-to-end, on-line submission of fingerprint images and data, designed to ensure high performance combined with high availability and reliability to the GBI Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

Monthly Update - GBI staff held an introductory call with the vendor, Idemia. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for December 2023.