

# ON THE JOB

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE



**DAVE YOST**  
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Spring 2019**

Vol. 11 | No. 2

### COVER STORY

# Quietly efficient & effective

**Low-profile state commission helps local police make big strides against organized crime**

The Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission would be the last crime-fighting group to crow about the many wins it has helped engineer through its 33-year history.

The commission, after all, prefers to thrive quietly behind the scenes, where it builds task forces from members of different law enforcement agencies to investigate crimes that can be entrenched and widespread.

Think drug running, money laundering and human trafficking but also mortgage fraud and public corruption.

“Without (the OOCIC task force), our drug epidemic would have been twice as bad as it was.”

— Ohio Rep. Phil Plummer

“Most people have no idea we exist,” said Rocky W. Nelson, executive director since 2011. “I served on the first task force in the late ’80s-early ’90s as a detective with the Union County Sheriff’s Office. And I still didn’t realize how OOCIC was designed with local law enforcement in mind.”

The commission’s under-the-radar profile belies the contributions it has made to communities statewide.

“Without (the OOCIC task force), our drug epidemic would have been twice as bad as it was,” state Rep. Phil Plummer, a former Montgomery County sheriff, said in recounting problems with Mexican drug cartels.

“We’d be in trouble, trust me.”

As a member of the commission, Portage County Prosecutor Victor Viglucci has seen the results firsthand.

“Some of the most successful task forces in this state’s history have come from OOCIC,” Viglucci said.

In 2018 alone, OOCIC task forces seized \$4 million in currency and \$57.5 million worth of drugs, said Deputy Director Matt Hilbert. The haul included 141 pounds of fentanyl, 411 pounds of meth, almost 2,000

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## OOCIC TASK FORCES’ STATISTICAL REPORT

(2009 – Present)



CATEGORY	TOTAL
Individuals indicted (counts)	3,785 (13,134)
Arrests	5,372
Search warrants served	3,782
Firearms seized	1,417
Heroin seized	555 lbs.
Fentanyl seized	265 lbs.
Cocaine seized	1,321 lbs.
Meth seized	647 lbs.
Marijuana seized	64,921 lbs.
U.S. currency seized	\$33.3 million
Street value of narcotics seizures	\$262.6 million
Potential human trafficking victims (rescued or referred services)	1,153

### NOTES:

- » The first seizure of fentanyl was in 2014.
- » Tracking of human trafficking statistics began in 2013.

### ASSISTANCE BEYOND TASK FORCES

The OOCIC also offers its audio and video experts to help law enforcement agencies outside of task forces. For example, the Columbus Division of Police used OOCIC’s team to enhance audio or video evidence in 37 cases last year. In addition, the commission welcomes agencies to send in cold case evidence now on tapes or videocassettes to be turned into digital files, which aren’t at risk of degrading over time. Call 800-589-6622 for more information.

To find out more about how OOCIC operates, or to submit a proposal for the commission to consider for a new task force, visit [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/OOCIC](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/OOCIC).

**INSIDE » Two Days in May speaker on how attack cut off pro-basketball career » BCI on how it broke serial killer case**



I don't pretend to know what it's like to be the victim of a violent crime, or what it's like to have a family member experience such a violation.

No one wants to imagine what that suffering must be like. Just the idea makes us stop that train of thought, perhaps offer a quick prayer, and turn our attention to something else.

But crime victims do not have that luxury.

Instead, they must deal with challenges such as physical recovery, financial stress and lost opportunity. Those burdens of violence are not lost on Aswad Thomas, keynote speaker for our Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance.

I marvel at the strength that keeps Thomas and other victims going.

I witnessed the aftermath of violent crime time and again during my eight years as Delaware County prosecutor, when I worked with victims to bring those who hurt them to justice.

Along the way, I learned the tremendous value of victim advocates.

When an advocate steps in to help,

victims are more likely to recover from their trauma and more likely to be able to aid in the case against the offender. And law officers can better focus on investigating the crime.

Taking care of victims and advocating for them get to the heart of my priority as Ohio's attorney general — to protect the unprotected.

Law enforcement officers and victim advocates do exactly that every day.

This is one of the many reasons that I am proud to sponsor the annual Two Days in May Conference.

The event gives us the chance to say thank you to people who are passionate about helping victims find the path to healing.

Very Respectfully Yours,

Dave Yost  
Ohio Attorney General

# Shooting victim finds new pursuit

Basketball standout was set to go pro before attack

Aswad Thomas, who is booked to speak at the Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance, tells a story about two young men of color who come from the same poor neighborhood. One is Thomas himself.

Of the men in his family, including cousins, five have been shot and seven have been incarcerated. "They were my nontraditional role models — individuals who I did not want to follow in their footsteps," Thomas, 36, said in an interview.

So he focused on school and basketball, becoming the first member of his family to go to college. He graduated with honors in 2009 from Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

A point guard on the basketball team, he also led the school to its first berth and first victory in the NCAA's Division III tournament.

"Playing basketball wasn't just a sport," he said. "It was the only outlet for me to really escape from this community where I was surrounded by violence, poverty, drugs."

The second man in Thomas' story shot him twice in the back.

The attack occurred in 2009, three weeks before Thomas was set to travel to the Netherlands to sign with a pro basketball club.

The shooter grew up in the same Hartford, Connecticut, neighborhood that Thomas did. He also had once been shot — in the face at age 14. Four years later, he and another man shot Thomas in a botched robbery at a corner store.

The story illustrates what Thomas calls the cycle of violence.

"He walked around my community for years angry, depressed, stressed and didn't get help," Thomas said. "I honestly feel that, as a result of his unaddressed trauma, I became a victim of gun violence."

"I think about, what if, when he became a victim, he had gotten all the support he needed to heal? Maybe I would be overseas playing basketball to this day, making a lot of money and living out my dream."

Instead, after leaving the hospital, Thomas relearned to walk and went on to earn a master's degree in social work from the University of



My story is not unique. My story is very common to so many victims of crime, primarily in marginalized communities — communities of color.

ASWAD THOMAS,  
crime victim and victim advocate



## 28th annual conference: "Hidden Victims, Hidden Crime"

- » May 20-21
- » Greater Columbus Convention Center
- » [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/TDIM](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/TDIM)

Connecticut. He's married, lives in Atlanta and is managing director of Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, through which he helps victims push for more support and a bigger role in the criminal justice system.

Too few victims and their families get the help they need to heal, Thomas said. That can lead to housing instability, drug use, revictimization and even criminal acts.

But addressing trauma can help crime victims live better lives and prevent more crime, Thomas said. Unfortunately, many victims don't even realize support services are available.

"I know that, as a college athlete, as someone who was known in the community, I got no support after I became a victim of gun violence, no help from victim services in the community,"

he said. "Law enforcement came to visit several times — not one time did they ask if I needed any help. They didn't tell me there was a victim advocate or victim's compensation."

That lack of support continued a pattern. In 1993, when Thomas was 10 and living in Highland Park, Michigan, his best friend, Reubin Elder, was killed — the random victim of a drive-by shooting. Thomas and his friends, he said, returned to school the next Monday.

"There weren't counselors at school," he said. "We didn't host an assembly to tell the kids what happened. Our families didn't talk about it."

Just as troubling, Thomas said, is how little the situation has changed since then.

"My story is not unique. My story is very common to so many victims of crime, primarily in marginalized communities — communities of color."

To stop the cycle of trauma and violence, he sees the need for more partnerships between police and community-based organizations.

"They're the people who can reach out and make a difference, especially if they get more resources," he said.

These days, Thomas considers himself lucky to be alive. He has new dreams — to create a national network of support groups for young male victims of gun violence and to help stop the cycle of violence.

"I'm gonna get there," he said.

## Grants will help trafficking victims

As attorney general, Dave Yost is emphasizing the fight against human trafficking, and he is turning up the pressure.

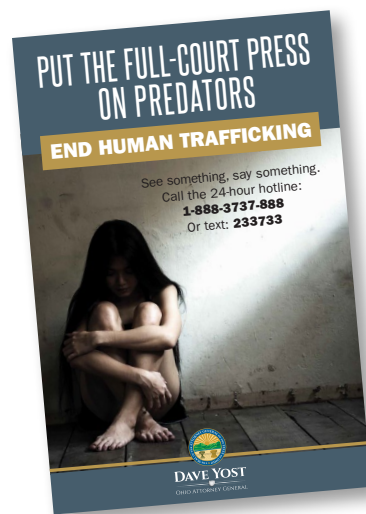
In one effort, his office is offering grants of up to \$10,000 to nonprofit and public agencies that deal with human trafficking to help survivors rebrand tattoos that once declared them as property.

"The journey of a survivor out of slavery and addiction and trauma is hard enough without a permanent reminder that is

literally part of your skin," Yost said.

Once grants are awarded, local courts with specialty dockets to address human trafficking determine a survivor's eligibility. So far, such specialty court dockets operate in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton and Summit counties.

To apply for a grant, contact Aaron T. Bryant, victim services development director, at [Aaron.Bryant@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](mailto:Aaron.Bryant@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).



## HELP FIGHT TRAFFICKING

AG Yost's office creates customized posters (like this one for March Madness games in Columbus) to raise awareness of human trafficking. If an event in your area will attract a big out-of-town crowd and you'd like to join the fight, email [Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](mailto:Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).



ON THE JOB  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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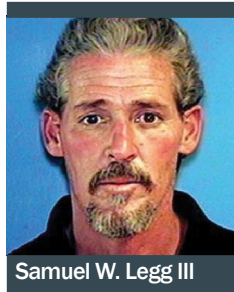
# How familial DNA led to ‘a serial killer’

Investigators spent years searching for a suspect after CODIS linked 3 cold-case killings through DNA left at crime scenes

A familial DNA test rarely used in Ohio led to the arrest of Samuel W. Legg III, a former truck driver suspected of killing at least three women decades ago — and maybe his stepdaughter.

“It’s fair to call him a serial killer,” Attorney General Dave Yost said in February while announcing Legg’s arrest.

The former northeastern Ohio resident, 50, who was extradited to Medina County from Arizona, is being held on a \$1 million bond in the 1997 rape of a 17-year-old. He also has been indicted in the 1992 killing of a woman in Mahoning County; other indictments are being prepared.



Samuel W. Legg III

Diane Gehres, technical leader of the Combined DNA Index System at the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, said CODIS first linked two of the crime scenes — a homicide in 1996 in Wood County and one the next year in Illinois — in 2006, when the system found the same DNA logged from both.

The Mahoning County homicide was added to the grim list in 2012.

“We knew the DNA was a male’s; we just didn’t know who it belonged to,” said Lori L. Braunschweiger, a criminal intelligence analyst who has worked these cold cases since 2012, the year she joined BCI. “So we were looking for other victims to give us more investigative information that I could run intel on.”

She and BCI Forensic Scientists Steve Wiechman, Stacy Violi, Erika Jimenez and others spent six years developing suspects and running their DNA, reading cold-case reports from throughout Ohio and the nation, and contacting police departments regarding unlogged evidence.

Until recently, though, they kept striking out.

## CODIS and familial DNA

Ohio joined CODIS, a national DNA database supported by the FBI, in the late 1990s. Nowadays, every adult arrested in or convicted

of a felony is supposed to be swabbed for addition to the system, as is any juvenile convicted of a crime that would be a felony if he or she were an adult.

“About 4,000 arrestees and convicted offenders are added to CODIS per month,” Gehres said.

DNA profiles from the scenes of crimes, both solved and unsolved, also are uploaded.

Every night, CODIS searches for matches, be they between crime scenes or between an offender and a crime scene. When the system finds a match, BCI sends a “hit letter” to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

“About 250 a month go out,” Gehres said.

Legg’s DNA was not logged in CODIS because he had not been arrested in or convicted of a felony since collecting began.

Still, there was a hint of him in the system.

BCI turned to a tool that mines CODIS to find familial DNA, or DNA so similar to the unknown offender’s that it might come from a parent, child or sibling. The software, developed by the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth, has been used just seven times in Ohio, partly because it can lead to an expensive process to follow leads.

For that follow-up, scientists must have more than the DNA profile typically collected for CODIS.

The standard profile tracks the same highly variable sections of DNA in every person, autosomal chromosomes. Every person has 22 pairs of those — one set from your mother and one from your father.

The 23rd chromosome people have consists of a pair of sex chromosomes: X if you’re female and Y if you’re male. Every man’s 23rd chromosome exactly matches his father’s, paternal grandfather’s and those of any brothers and sons he has. The same would be true for a woman and her corresponding female relatives.

Back to the Texas software: When it links a crime scene to near-match autosomal DNA of offenders in CODIS, scientists test both for the sex-specific DNA. At \$6,000, the process is more expensive than standard DNA testing.

If scientists get a match, they know they’ve likely hit on a close genetic relative of the perpetrator.



At the Bureau of Criminal Investigation’s location in Richfield, forensic scientists work in the DNA lab.

## Important note

The more DNA in CODIS, the more leads the system and familial DNA testing can provide. Please ensure your agency is collecting DNA from everyone it should be.

Familial DNA searches are used only on cases in which there is a public safety issue and all investigative leads have been exhausted. There is a formal request and approval process. For more information, contact CODIS@ohioattorneygeneral.gov.

## The Legg connection

It was one of Braunschweiger’s days off, a Monday in early January, when Gehres’ office sent word that the familial DNA test had resulted in a hit on a man in CODIS. He had been convicted of an unrelated crime.

Braunschweiger and another BCI criminal intelligence analyst, Lisa Savage, went to work that night to identify directly related males.

“By the next afternoon, we had a family tree and all of the birth certificates laid out,” Braunschweiger said.

The man in CODIS has a father and two brothers, including one too young to have committed the cold-case crimes.

The other was Samuel Legg.

Braunschweiger’s research showed that Legg

## Familial DNA successes

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation has used the familial DNA testing process on seven occasions. The tests resulted in a suspect three times, including Samuel Legg. Here are the other two:

In 2016, a man abducted a 6-year-old from her bedroom in Cleveland. He sexually assaulted the girl and dropped her off on a street corner. CODIS linked DNA from the crime to an attempted abduction: that of a 10-year-old in Elyria a few months earlier.



After the familial DNA process was used in Ohio for the first time, Justin A. Christian was arrested in December 2016. He pleaded guilty to kidnapping, rape, gross sexual imposition and burglary in both incidents and is serving a 35-year prison sentence.

In the summer of 2018, two stranger rapes on a Deerfield bike trail in Portage County had the community on edge. Another rape in a Mahoning County park, on Sept. 4, 2018, was linked to the perpetrator. Three days later — within 24 hours of BCI’s familial DNA testing — authorities arrested



Shawn Michael Wendling, a Pennsylvania man who worked in Ohio. On March 1, he pleaded guilty to rape, kidnapping and felonious assault in Portage County, receiving 30 years in prison. His case in Mahoning County is still pending.

had worked jobs and lived in places that gave him the opportunity to commit the three CODIS-linked killings.

But to confirm that Legg was the man who should be charged, authorities needed his DNA. Surreptitiously trailing him in public to pick up, say, a dropped cigarette or a used plastic fork is one way to obtain DNA without alerting a person he is a suspect.

But Legg, who has neurosyphilis and schizophrenia, was living in a group home in Arizona, so finding him in public conveniently smoking or eating would be tough.

BCI needed another route to confirm that his DNA matched to the crime scenes.

Braunschweiger went back to searching for cold cases with similar MOs, and Forensic Scientist Becca Salzer started to research whether Legg had been a suspect in any case that didn’t result in charges.

On the same day, both found something.

Braunschweiger came across a 29-year-old cold case from Elyria in which a 14-year-old cheerleader had been killed. Legg was the girl’s stepfather.

Salzer found the rape in Medina, a case in which Legg had been accused but never charged. When police questioned him in 1997, he claimed the sex was consensual.

The 17-year-old girl had gotten a rape kit completed, pieces of which the Medina police still had. DNA from those pieces — which Legg had confirmed would be his during questioning — matched the unknown cold-case killer’s in CODIS.

The discovery allowed Medina police to secure a search warrant to swab Legg for DNA. The sample confirmed the match, and Legg was extradited — all within a month of the familial DNA test.

The speed “was so crazy after working on these cases all of these years,” Braunschweiger said.

And another upside to the BCI team’s work, she said, was the resubmitting of old unsolved-homicide evidence from agencies throughout Ohio and in other states.

“Quite a few of them came back with DNA profiles, from places like Florida and California, Colorado.”

Which means more cases have a better chance of being solved.

## Heinz von Eckartsberg BCI’s new No. 2

The new assistant superintendent of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation knows what local police need.

After all, Heinz von Eckartsberg arrived at BCI directly from an eight-year run as chief of police in Dublin, a community of 49,000 people in central Ohio.

“Law enforcement begins at the local level, and we are thrilled to add Chief von Eckartsberg to our team,” Attorney General Dave Yost said in announcing the appointment.

Von Eckartsberg joined the Dublin PD in 1983. Besides chief, he served as a patrol officer, a patrol sergeant, operations commander and services-bureau commander.

During his time leading the department, personnel grew from 90 to 113 and crime declined every year. The department also started a citizens academy and moved to shared-services dispatch operations, based in Dublin.

“After 36 years in local law enforcement, I very much look forward to interacting with and providing assistance to our partners throughout the state,” he said.

Von Eckartsberg and his wife have three grown children, and the couple are passionate about motorcycles and motorcycle travel.

He also is a vegan and has run 10 marathons.

“But I’m not running them anymore,” von Eckartsberg said. “Ten was enough ... I think.”

## Jeffrey Scott New leader of OPOTA

As the new executive director of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy, Jeffrey Scott said he welcomes suggestions for improvement from the staff and others.

“The nice thing about being the new guy is having an open mind and looking for ideas,” said Scott, who in April became OPOTA’s 11th executive director. “If you’ve had ideas sitting on the shelf, this is the opportunity to bring them up.”

Scott arrived at OPOTA from Notre Dame College in South Euclid, where he was police chief. He also is president of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police and has instructed and written about firearms, tactical response, active threats and other topics.

He has worked for 30 years in public safety, including more than 23 in law enforcement, after beginning his career as a firefighter/paramedic.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, who named Scott to the position, praised Scott’s background as a notable asset.

“A cop and a teacher who’s going to teach cops, Chief Scott brings a wealth of educational and first-hand law enforcement experience to the academy,” Yost said.



# OPOTA honors brave officers who gave everything

On May 2, four Ohio officers who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2018 were honored at the 32nd annual Ohio Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony.

Their names were added to the memorial wall at the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy in London, bringing the total number of fallen officers honored there to 799.

The public show of support for fallen officers and their sacrifices is similarly striking.

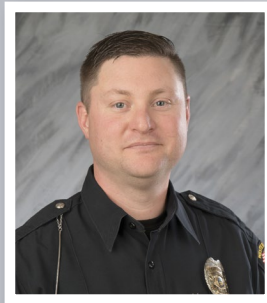
Sgt. Tony Rudd of the Westerville Police Division, for example, said he was impressed by how many law officers from other agencies as well as community members turned out for a weeklong show of support after two colleagues were ambushed in February 2018.

"A lot of people, you think they only see us as the badge — that they see the uniform, but they don't see the person behind it," he said. "So the biggest surprise to me was how big this thing got. I saw a different side of Westerville — and all of central Ohio, for that matter — when Tony and Eric got killed. People lined the streets for miles and miles, standing in the cold for all of that time. "That just goes to show you who the people we work for are," he said. "It was such a good feeling."

Here's how the four officers who died in the line of duty last year lived:



## OFFICER ERIC J. JOERING Westerville Division of Police



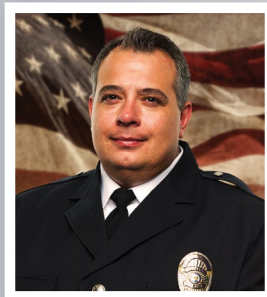
"Eric would give you the shirt off his back if you needed it; if you needed money, he'd give you money," said Westerville Officer Guy Cerino, who was hired in 2001, the same year that Joering was.

"That was the kind of person he was."

Joering, 39, was an expert in police tactics and weapons. During his years at Westerville, he served as a juvenile-case detective, training officer, firearms trainer, street cop and K9 officer.

In his off time, the married father of three girls liked to hunt, scuba dive and spend time with his family and friends.

## OFFICER MATHEW J. MAZANY Mentor Police Department

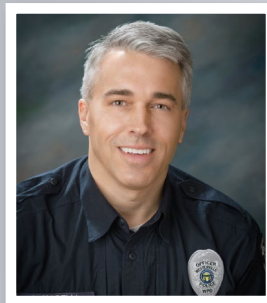


"Mentor was a safer place and the Mentor PD was a better police department because of Mat," retired Mentor Sgt. Scott Tkach, who supervised Mazany for six years, said at his funeral.

Mazany, 41, was known as an officer who'd speak his mind and then move on. In his 14 years with the department, he worked patrol on 12-hour midnight shifts.

Outside of work, the married father of one enjoyed smoking cigars and drinking whiskey, playing video games with his son, and riding his motorcycle. He'd wanted to be a cop for his whole life.

## OFFICER ANTHONY P. MORELLI Westerville Division of Police



"Since 1988, any story that I have told — the best times that I've had as an adult — inevitably Tony Morelli is part of that story," said retired Training Officer Dave King, part of a tightknit group of officers who started in Westerville about the same time 31 years ago.

Morelli, 54, had served as a patrol officer, crime prevention officer and school resource officer. He worked special duty at the Westerville Library and taught self-defense classes for women.

The married father of two enjoyed tailgating before Ohio State games, working out and having fun with his friends.

"Every day was something special to him," Rudd said.

## OFFICER VU X. NGUYEN Cleveland Division of Police



"All Vu wanted was for his family to be happy," said Sgt. Jennifer Ciaccia, who went through the academy with Nguyen and lives next door to his family. "But he also somehow managed to touch so many people's lives and make a difference by being himself and being engaged."

Nguyen, 50, spent 20 years as a popular officer patrolling the streets of Cleveland.

The married father of two girls, who had 14 siblings, loved to eat and plan vacations for his family and anyone else who'd let him. He was known for passing out popsicles and organizing games for big groups of kids.

## A success story

One former OOCIC effort, the Southwest Ohio Violent Crime Task Force, was brought together to combat violent crime in the small Village of Lincoln Heights in Hamilton County, said Lt. Brian E. Stapleton of that county's sheriff's office.

"The village was known as a safe haven for criminals who would go unmolested by the local police department," he said.

In addition to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, agencies that participated in the task force were the Cincinnati, Woodlawn and Lockland police departments, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the FBI.

By its conclusion, the task force had closed over 30 murder cases, taken 92 guns off the street and arrested a Lincoln Heights police sergeant for theft in office. The village police department also ended up shutting down.

"This task force affected real change in the Village of Lincoln Heights," Stapleton said. "This was far and away the most successful investigative unit that I have been a part of in my 23-year career."



## In central Ohio ...

In June last year, a task force arrested eight people on felony drug charges and seized about 75 pounds of cocaine, 500 pounds of marijuana, two stolen firearms and more than \$500,000 in U.S. currency, part of a major narcotics investigation.



## In western Ohio ...

In December, a task force learned narcotics were being smuggled inside legitimate loads on semitrucks. The agents seized 56 pounds of fentanyl, 26 pounds of cocaine and 21 pounds of heroin. A California man and an Arizona resident were arrested.

Continued from Page 1

pounds of marijuana and more than 59,000 prescription pills. Also, 585 people were indicted and 77 victims of human trafficking were rescued.

The commission, created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1986, serves as a facilitator for the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and prosecutors who join its task forces. It provides special investigative powers as well as equipment, funding and other assistance.

## Local control

An OOCIC task force is usually led by the sheriff's office or police department that proposes it to the commission, allowing those who know their geographic areas best, and their problems best, to make the decisions.

That local control has been lauded as key to the commission's enduring success.

"If you run it locally, you have the local trust of citizens reporting to us," Plummer said.

Deputy Chief Tim Becker of the Columbus Division of Police, which is active in several task forces, agreed.

"Having our own supervisors command these initiatives has been very valuable, especially since we are the largest agency in our region and contribute many personnel," Becker said. "This allows the task force to operate within the core values of our agency, while simultaneously embracing a mission larger than our city."

It also enhances the chances for success, he said.

"A task force serves as a force multiplier, allowing our personnel to accomplish much more than they could alone."

## Fairness & efficiency

The OOCIC has seven members: the attorney general as well as six appointees — two sheriffs,

two police chiefs and two prosecutors — chosen by the governor in collaboration with the AG and legislators. No more than four members can be from the same political party, which helps keep the decisions about which criminal organizations to pursue nonpartisan.

The commission, supported by a staff of 10, operates on a budget that was 10 times smaller than what the state sent to the Lottery Commission to spend on advertising contracts last year.

"The resources and abilities that OOCIC is able to provide," said Gallia County Sheriff Matt Champlin, whose office has been a part of task forces, "are one small example of how our citizens receive a return on their tax dollars."

He said his office, as a smaller department, has participated in task forces that led to successful prosecutions of criminals "we would otherwise not have had the time and resources to focus on."

## Valuable resources

Two of the most important resources the commission grants are subpoena power and the ability to investigate in any county included in a task force's mission, even one outside the jurisdiction of an officer's home agency.

That has been a primary goal since the start.

"Organized crime knows no geographical boundaries or jurisdictional limitations," says a 1982 report commissioned by Gov. James A. Rhodes to explore how much organized crime cost Ohio. "... Law enforcement officials in Ohio, however, enjoy no such free latitude."

Four years after the report was issued, the commission was established.

"Because the statutes that created OOCIC have the big picture in mind, it accomplishes big results," said Viglucci, the commission member.

Once the OOCIC approves a task force's creation, the help that the commission provides depends

on the nature of the investigation.

The OOCIC can supply technical gear and any special training needed; it can cover confidential-informant payments and contraband purchases by undercover officers. Part of the deal, too, is workers' compensation insurance and potentially travel, office space and phone bill payments.

Members of the commission's staff offer legal advice, help with clerical work and investigations, and forensic audio and video analysis.

"This support is instrumental on a daily basis for the effectiveness of the detectives," said Chief George Kral of the Toledo Police Department, which has experience on OOCIC task forces.

## Trusted partner

There's no concrete way to measure the value of OOCIC's intangibles, such as the trust and respect it has earned from local departments.

Nelson, the OOCIC's executive director, said he often fields calls from law enforcement officials looking for an introduction to someone in another part of the state. And he humbly emphasized that OOCIC successes rely on the relationships local law enforcement agencies build with each other and state and federal agencies.

"We're here to build those relationships," he said.

Indeed, Kral named nine local, state and federal agencies with which the Toledo PD has stronger ties thanks to task force participation.

"These lines of communication can only enhance the battle against the criminal element," he said. "Rocky Nelson and Matt Hilbert should be commended for their hard work."

Likewise, Columbus Deputy Chief Becker praised the commission staff and its leaders, calling them knowledgeable and gifted mediators.

"The ability of the OCIC task force model to exponentially increase the success of our agency cannot be credited enough," he said.



## Coming up

### Give us your feedback

We're looking for ways to improve the On the Job newsletter — to turn it into a “must-read” for you and your colleagues in law enforcement — and we'd like your help. What types of articles or information related to criminal justice in Ohio would you like to see that seem to be missing? Conversely, what do you find less interesting or less helpful? Please send your suggestions to [Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](mailto:Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov).

### Share your success stories

As part of our improvement effort, we'd like to showcase police success stories from throughout Ohio. To do that, we need you to share examples of law enforcement efforts — big or small — that represent model police work. Email those details to [Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](mailto:Publications@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov) or call Jenny Applegate at 614-995-0328.

## By the numbers

Some facts and figures\* from the 2018 Annual Report on Capital Crimes, recently completed by the Ohio Attorney General's Office:

# 333

Death sentences issued by juries in Ohio since 1981, including four in 2018

# 56

People who have been executed, including one in 2018 — Robert Van Hook

# 21

People who have received commutations

# 29

People who died before they could be executed

# 45.9

The average age of an executed inmate

# 17.2

The average time in years spent on death row

# 8

People who have been ruled ineligible for the death penalty based on intellectual disability

# 75

Death sentences that have been removed as a result of judicial actions

# 142

People who were on death row as of Dec. 31, including 29 with execution dates scheduled

\* Time frame is 1981-2018.