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UA Partnering with Law Enforcement, Judicial Agencies to Develop Technology Training Center

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – Law enforcement and criminal justice professionals, who increasingly rely upon technology in providing public safety, will have more opportunities for technology training through a new center under development by multiple agencies in partnership with The University of Alabama.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center, the Administrative Office of Courts, the District Attorney's Office of Baldwin County, Southwest Alabama Integrated Criminal Justice System, or SAICS, the city of Gulf Shores and UA are teaming up to develop the Justice and Law Enforcement Technology Center, known as the JLETC.

"Our College of Continuing Studies and our *CARE* Research and Development Laboratory have demonstrated their abilities to provide services that can benefit the men and women who protect and serve us," said UA President Robert E. Witt "We are pleased to build upon those relationships through our participation in this partnership."

"The original vision of our grant from Congress was a seamless integration of information throughout the criminal justice community," said David Whetstone, district attorney of Baldwin County. "We are now poised to complete the vision through a certification and training program which will be the first of its kind anywhere in this country. We have brought together the best in our state as partners. What started as a regional program stands ready to become a national model for technological training of the criminal justice professional."

Developers of the center envision it becoming a model in its role as a National Demonstration Center and a Training Certification Center. An initial step will be the launching of a certification program which would, upon completion, allow participants to obtain the designation of Agency Information Security Officer.

Future ventures could include the development of a corrections academy, a logistics center that would coordinate the funding, outfitting, and testing of alternative fuels vehicles for law enforcement, a pursuit and defense driving program, a center for law enforcement technology testing and demonstration, and a museum for law enforcement technology.

The city of Gulf Shores will assist in identifying land and facilities for the Center.

Center developers estimate more than 1,200 officers and justice department officials annually would take advantage of the initial certification and training programs to be offered.

An increase in sophisticated crime, such as money laundering, and the use of technology, such as the Internet, in carrying out criminal activity makes additional training vital, the developers say. Also, new laws requiring law enforcement and criminal justice professionals to demonstrate the security of data in their possession necessitate increased understanding and training.

UA's [CARE Research & Development Laboratory](#) has developed leading edge technologies, including an electronic citation system that is being used by state troopers throughout the state of Alabama. The lab has created an Officer's Desktop that integrates e-citation with several other software applications along with a driver's license scanner. Other products produced by the lab include data analysis software used to identify traffic safety problems and plan countermeasures. This software is being used in eight states in addition to Alabama. The lab is also currently designing several software applications for the judicial arena and working on a Homeland Security project to counter terrorism.

UA's [College of Continuing Studies](#) delivers educational opportunities to non-traditional students through workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, certification training and other professional development programs. The College

provides degree opportunities through off-campus programs and also weekend, evening and distance education programs.

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