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Bossier DA | Technology Saves Time and Money

Legislation allows forensic testifying via video

Sean Green
sean@bossierpress.com

Experts in forensics can now give testimony in Bossier Parish courtrooms without ever leaving the comfort of their lab.

Bossier/Webster Parish District Attorney J. Schuyler Marvin announced during a press conference Wednesday that the parish is launching a wireless video link communication between the North Louisiana Crime Lab in Shreveport and all eight courtrooms within the Bossier Courthouse.

Haughton Rep. Henry Burns and Shreveport Sen. B.L. "Buddy" Shaw championed HB 119 during the 2009 Legislative session which allows the court to permit employees of crime labs, coroners, forensic pathologists and any other person practicing in the field of knowledge and expertise in the gathering, examination, and analysis of evidence by scientific means to testify through a

simultaneous wireless video link.

"The set up simply allows them to turn around in their chair at their desk, raise their right hand, be sworn in and begin testifying," said Marvin.



Burns

The Bossier Parish Police Jury purchased the \$5,500 Polycom video equipment and the necessary broadband communication is being provided by Bluebird Wireless Broadband Services at no extra cost.

This equipment makes the parish the first ones in the state to begin utilizing the bill. The equipment will allow the participants to see the courtroom, attorneys and judge and there will be 45 days of notice that the system will plans to be used in the case.

Marvin said that the system will pay for itself in a month's time due to the

savings that will come from preventing crime lab employees being forced to travel across north Louisiana.



Shaw

"The situation we were facing is that our forensic people would have to travel to Tallulah and get there and be told they were going to have to wait, then not testify until after lunch and then have to drive back to Shreveport," said Marvin.

"Because of the area they cover, you could see where we were headed. We were wasting a tremendous amount of time and money on traveling," he added.

A live link with employees at the North Louisiana Crime Lab in Shreveport and the courtroom press conference demonstrated the effectiveness and speed with which the technology will work.

"Constitutional cross examination requirements

are met by this law, this is real time," said Caddo District Attorney Charles Scott.

The bill took life when Marvin went to Burns and Shaw informing them of his desire to have a bill that would allow for the teleconference testimony.

"(Some of the representatives) didn't initially see the merit in it, but this is the new Louisiana. They realized there are many parts of the state that had the same challenges Schuyler mentioned and I want to salute the DA Association, Schuyler and laud Senator Shaw for keeping the bill alive on the Senate side," said Burns.

"This is something that grow all over the state because of its efficiency and effectiveness. So thank you for the opportunity," said Shaw.

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David A. Specht, Jr.
Editor and Publisher

dspecht@bossierpress.com

Sean Green

Managing Editor

Sean@bossierpress.com

Jerry Byrd

Sports Editor

jbsportswriter@juno.com

Alan Nickerson

Circulation Manager

circulation@bossierpress.com

Randy Brown

Advertising Manager

ads@bossierpress.com