



THE PLAIN DEALER

Law and Order

Saturday, July 21, 2007

OHIO

State takes part in DNA project

Ohio is one of five states that will participate in a project to improve the use of DNA analysis to solve crimes. The National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices selected Ohio, Florida, Kentucky, New York and Washington to develop forensic DNA analysis to its "full potential as a crime-fighting tool," the center said in a news release. The Improving Forensic DNA Policy Project's members will be from governors' offices, crime labs, law enforcement, state legislatures, state justice agencies and prosecutors' and public defenders' offices. They will seek to expand DNA databases, adding missing persons and unidentified human remains and developing sources of money for forensic DNA programs. Beginning this fall, Ohio will also work with the other states to share ideas, compare and analyze policies and refine police procedures.

CLEVELAND

Free legal help available

Low-income Clevelanders can get free legal advice Saturday at the Friendly Inn Settlement, where residents can meet with Legal Aid Society attorneys and volunteer attorneys from the Thompson Hine law firm. Last year, the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and volunteer attorneys assisted 575 people through such neighborhood-based sessions. The Legal Aid Society cannot assist with criminal cases, but does handle civil problems, like divorce, disputes with landlords, getting special education at public schools, battling predatory lenders and rental centers, getting public benefits and the earned income tax credit, immigration status, contracts and bankruptcy. Attorneys will be at the Friendly Inn, 2386 Unwin Road, from 9:45 to noon today.

Woman's death investigated

Police are investigating the violent death of a 45-year-old woman neighbors found outside an apartment building about noon Friday on the city's East Side. Police did not identify the woman, who was found next to the apartment building in the 3500 block of East 142nd Street, near Kinsman Road. Neighbors reported hearing a woman screaming about 1:30 a.m. Friday, said police spokesman Thomas Stacho. The woman lived in the neighborhood but not in the apartment building, Stacho said. She had suffered head injuries.

Teen dead of gunshot wound

Police detectives are trying to determine if a Cleveland youth accidentally shot himself early Friday. Police found Alan Day, 17, dead in the basement of his home in the 4150 block of East 138th Street about 1:40 a.m., Lt. Thomas Stacho said. Detectives are interviewing his brother and another person who was with him. They called police.

STRONGSVILLE

Deputy chief charged

A high-ranking police officer was charged with domestic violence after he was accused of striking his 16-year-old daughter in the mouth, according to a police report. Deputy Chief James Spickler appeared in Berea Municipal Court Thursday, where he pleaded not guilty to a misdemeanor domestic violence charge, court records show. Spickler, who oversees patrol operations for the department, has been placed on leave until the case is settled, according to a news release by the Police Department. Spickler's daughter arrived at the police station about 1:40 a.m. Thursday to report an argument with her father, according to the police report. The girl told police that Spickler hit her in the mouth after a struggle. Spickler told an investigator that he did not intend to injure his daughter. He is free on a personal bond. Spickler declined comment when reached by phone Friday.

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