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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SECURES FUNDING TO ESTABLISH A HIGH TECH CRIME INVESTIGATION UNIT

*Muncie Indiana –*The Delaware County Prosecutor is pleased to announce that it has secured $285,000 of state funding per year to establish a High Tech Crime Investigation Unit that will assist prosecutors with the processing of digital evidence.

Historically, law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's offices in Indiana sent all of their digital evidence to the Indiana to the Indiana State Police Cyber Crime Unit. The State Police have always provided phenomenal service. The only issue was that there are only so many analysts with the State Police Cyber Crime Units. These days, most crimes involve cellular phones or other electronic devices. Accordingly and thorough no fault of their own, the Indiana State Police the Cyber Crime Unit became severely backlogged. Once evidence was submitted to the State Police it took many months to get results back to law enforcement and prosecutors. The Indiana General Assembly took note of this backlog in the investigative process.

In this past legislative session, House Enrolled Act 1082 (2021) added Section 33-39-8-7 to the Indiana Code. This provision allows the Indiana Prosecuting Attorney Council to "establish high tech crimes units to assist prosecuting attorneys in investigating, collecting evidence, and prosecuting high tech crimes." High tech crimes are defined as "a criminal act that is either: (1) committed with or (2) assisted by digital, network, or communications technology." The Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council was able to fund 10 regional hubs, geographically located throughout the state to cover all 92 counties. Those host counties have partnered with academic institutions. With these programs and partnerships with local universities, prosecutor offices will work hand in hand with local law enforcement and college students to analyze and process digital evidence. The result will be faster turnaround for investigations and more thorough investigations, leading to more just outcomes for everyone involved in the legal system. With these new high tech crime units, every county and every prosecutor office will have access to state-of-the-art technology that they previously have not had access to.

Out of the 92 counties in Indiana, the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office was selected as one of the ten prosecutors across the State to establish a High Tech Crime Unit (HTCU). The Delaware County HTCU will serve law enforcement agencies in Delaware, Blackford, Fayette, Grant, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Rush, Union, Wabash, and Wayne Counties. A map detailing what areas the hub counties will serve is included with this press release. The Delaware County HTCU will be housed in the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office. The funding will come each year from the State.

The Indiana State Police will still operate a Cyber Crime Unit in order to assist law enforcement and prosecutors and make sure that all digital evidence can be processed across the state.

"We are extremely excited about these new programs and the impact they will have on the criminal justice system," Chris Naylor, IPAC Executive Director, said. "We're incredibly thankful for the work of Rep. Greg Steuerwald for championing this bill, all the lawmakers who helped on the legislation and to our university partners who are working alongside prosecutors to make these units possible."

Delaware County Prosecutor Eric Hoffman said "[t]his is huge. It is a real game changer in criminal investigations. We now have the ability to process digital evidence locally and do so for our surrounding counties. I would like to personally thank my Chief Deputy Zach Craig. Zach took the lead on this process and put together a great application to the State which was eventually accepted and approved. Delaware County would not have received the funds for the HTCU without the hard work and dedication of Zach Craig. I would also like to thank our community partners on this project:
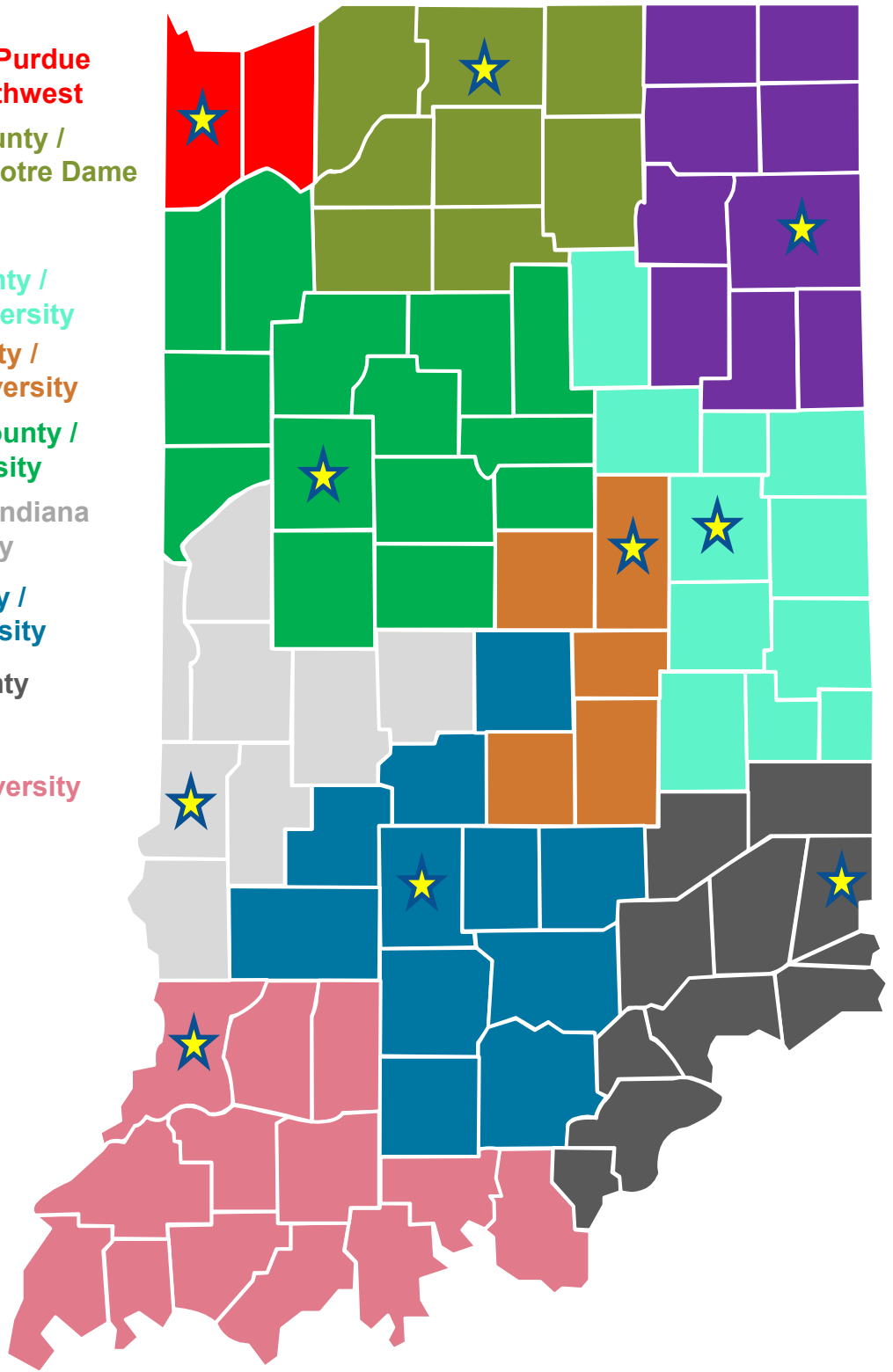
- The Ball Brothers Foundation;
- Jud Fisher and the Ball Brothers Project Sybertooth;
- Ball State University;
- Ball State University Police Department;
- Muncie Police Department; and
- Delaware County Sheriff's Office."

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Zachary Craig said "I'm thrilled our office was selected to serve as a host county for a regional High Tech Crime Unit. This has been the very definition of a collaborative effort that was made possible by great community partners that have joined together. This new unit will be instrumental in aiding police agencies to swiftly combat crime and provide justice to our community. We have always strived to be a valuable resource for the law enforcement agencies in our community, and this new unit will help to further aid that goal."

In the coming months, the hubs will begin purchasing the necessary software and hardware and hiring staff for the high tech units with the goal of the units being fully operational in early 2022.

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Lake County / Purdue University Northwest

St. Joseph County / University of Notre Dame

Allen County / Indiana Tech

Delaware County / Ball State University

Madison County / Anderson University

Tippecanoe County / Purdue University

Vigo County / Indiana State University

Monroe County / Indiana University

Dearborn County

Knox County / Vincennes University

Host County – Lake County / Partner Institution – Purdue University Northwest
Other counties serviced in this hub: Porter County

Host County – St. Joseph County / Partner Institution – University of Notre Dame
Other counties serviced in this hub: Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Marshall, Pulaski and Starke counties.

Host County – Allen County / Partner Institution – Indiana Tech
Other counties serviced in this hub: Adams, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells and Whitley counties.

Host County – Tippecanoe County / Partner Institution – Purdue University
Other counties serviced in this hub: Benton, Boone, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Howard, Jasper, Miami, Montgomery, Newton, Tipton, Warren and White counties.

Host County – Delaware County / Partner Institution – Ball State University
Other counties serviced in this hub: Blackford, Fayette, Grant, Henry, Jay, Rush, Union, Wabash and Wayne counties.

Host County – Madison County / Partner Institution – Anderson University
Other counties serviced in the hub: Hamilton, Hancock, Johnson and Shelby counties.

Host County – Vigo County / Partner Institution – Indiana State University
Other counties serviced in the hub: Clay, Fountain, Hendricks, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan and Vermillion counties.

Host County – Monroe County / Partner Institution – Indiana University
Other counties serviced in the hub: Bartholomew, Brown, Greene, Jackson, Lawrence, Marion, Morgan, Orange, Owen and Washington counties.

Host County – Dearborn County
Other counties serviced in the hub: Clark, Decatur, Floyd, Franklin, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, Scott and Switzerland counties.

Host County – Knox County / Partner Institution – Vincennes University
Other counties serviced in the hub: Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Gibson, Harrison, Martin, Perry, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh and Warrick counties.