

COMMISSIONER'S CORRESPONDENCE – SLMPD's Crime Gun Intelligence Center and NIBIN, and how we leverage these tools to reduce gun violence:

Much like fingerprints collected at the scene of a crime can point detectives in the direction of a perpetrator, ballistic evidence like shell casings and crime guns also have unique markings that can help investigators identify who is responsible for gun crimes.

In January 2017, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department created the Intelligence Division's Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC), with the purpose of examining ballistic evidence and developing leads to help detectives identify those responsible.

The SLMPD CGIC follows national best practices that are outlined by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and our agency is one of a growing number to embed these units into their department's operations.

Whenever shell casings or crime guns are recovered, they are submitted to our lab to be examined and entered into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). This process involves agencies like ours entering ballistics evidence into this national network. Those images are correlated against the nationwide database, resulting in a report that reveals any associations between other entries – which could have resulted from shots fired incidents, shootings or other evidence recoveries.

NIBIN provides our investigators with the ability to search against evidence from our jurisdiction as well as others all across the country, and the investigative leads that result from this process help point detectives in the right direction of suspects. A NIBIN report resulting from a firearm recovery could reveal shooting incidents that might have been committed by its possessor. In other cases, NIBIN reports from shootings or shots fired incidents might help investigators identify an ongoing gang or group conflict.

I have had the privilege of working in several agencies that embrace this technology, and I have also been a member of the ATF's National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board – which helps promote the use of NIBIN in agencies across the country. I have seen firsthand the positive results from utilizing the NIBIN system and from operating a Crime Gun Intelligence Center, and we continue to see its benefits here in St. Louis.