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Contact: Ken Li
kli@chempetitive.com
312.997.2436 ext. 112

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE GRANT WILL ENABLE 200 FORENSIC SCIENTISTS TO RECEIVE TRAINING AT THE COLLEGE OF MICROSCOPY

WESTMONT, IL. (Oct. 1, 2008) – The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a US Department of Justice agency, today awarded a grant to the College of Microscopy (COM) to train 200 trace evidence examiners in 11 forensics courses over the next two years, starting in February 2009. All of a student's expenses, including tuition, travel and accommodations, will be paid by the "NIJ Forensic Science Training Development and Delivery Program" grant. The College of Microscopy, the education division of The McCrone Group, a world leader in materials and forensics analysis, offers forensics courses led by experts in their field and provides students with hands-on experience using state-of-the-art equipment in materials analysis techniques commonly used in trace evidence analysis.

"Criminalistics professionals require ongoing education and training to keep abreast of rapidly changing developments in their field," said Charles Zona, Dean of the College of Microscopy. "We are grateful for the National Institute of Justice's support, which will allow both new and seasoned forensics scientists to learn from forensic experts and use the latest available techniques and equipment."

COM's Forensic Microscopy Training Delivery Program (FMTDP) is one of the nation's only continuing education programs to offer accredited, hands-on laboratory training for forensics trace evidence examiners. The FMTDP emphasizes sample preparation, microscopical characterization, instrumental analysis and practical application.

The FMTDP will offer the following 11 forensic training courses under the NIJ grant:

General Microscopy Courses	Forensic Trace Evidence Courses
<p>COM100: Modern Polarized Light and Chemical Microscopy</p> <p>COM200: Scanning Electron Microscopy</p> <p>COM300: Particle Isolation, Manipulation and Mounting</p> <p>COM600: Infrared Microscopy (FTIR)</p> <p>COM610: Raman Microscopy</p>	<p>COM400: Examination of Forensic Trace Evidence Particles</p> <p>COM401: Hair Comparisons</p> <p>COM402: Fiber Identification</p> <p>COM406: Forensic Soil Examination</p> <p>COM430: Identification of White-Powder Unknowns</p> <p>COM700: Body Fluid Identification (Sperm Detection)</p>

COM's instructors are practicing forensic trace evidence examiners who currently use these techniques on a daily basis and are considered to be experts in their field. They are also members of the technical staff of the McCrone Associates, the analytical division of The McCrone Group. McCrone Associates is known worldwide for pioneering innovative particle identification and material analysis methods with a specialty in trace evidence analysis.

COM offers a Web-Classroom-Web learning program that allows for practical training in trace evidence analysis while reducing time away from casework through distance learning. The NIJ considers both of these to be critical components to the ongoing instruction of forensic personnel. This program starts with Web-based material prior to the course and ensures that the participants are ready to take full advantage of the classroom sessions. The hands-on classroom sessions range from 3 to 4.5 days, follow a traditional classroom format, and provide students with access to COM's state-of-the-art light and electron microscopes and infrared and Raman spectrometers. The McCrone Group has the world's largest collection of microscopy and microspectroscopy instruments for training under one roof. The Web-based follow-up course provides additional material for students to continue contact with experienced forensic trace evidence examiners through online virtual classrooms.

Trace evidence examiners from U.S. state and local crime laboratories recognized by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors and NIJ qualify for the grant. The first FMTDP class, White Powder Identification, will start in February 2009; the enrollment deadline is 21 days prior to the course with proof of flight itinerary and completed application. Interested students can find more details about the program, review the courses, and apply at www.collegeofmicroscopy.com. Offline registration is available by calling the registrar at (630) 887-7100.

About The McCrone Group

Founded in 1956 and located in Westmont, IL, The McCrone Group, Inc., is a world leader in materials analysis and is internationally recognized as the premier microscopy resource. The company is comprised of three business units: McCrone Associates, the analytical service division; McCrone Microscopes & Accessories, the instrument sales division; and the College of Microscopy, the education division that provides training to industry and government scientists worldwide. For more information about The McCrone Group, please visit www.mccrone.com.

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