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February 27, 2009

In regards to: NAS Committee Report

SWGFAST considers the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) *Committee on Identifying the Needs of the Forensic Science Community* to be a significant initiative. With much anticipation, the Committee's report, "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward," was released to the public on February 18, 2009.

For all individuals engaged at any level in the forensic science profession, the NAS report should be regarded as essential reading.

SWGFAST will be evaluating the substance of the report and the supporting information cited within it at its next meeting, May 4-8, 2009. A distinguished member of the NAS Committee has accepted SWGFAST's invitation to attend the May meeting. SWGFAST will be discussing the report with the Committee member and obtaining a better understanding of the underlying thoughts that went into the report. At the conclusion of its May, 2008 meeting, SWGFAST will publish a statement to the community about the report and SWGFAST's plans to address the recommendations in it regarding the friction ridge science.

SWGFAST suggests friction ridge examiners maintain a perspective of the intent of the NAS Committee's work, and ultimately how the findings that it presented will benefit the forensic science profession and society as a whole.

Best Regards,

Leonard Butt, Chair  
Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge  
Analysis, Study and Technology