



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Macomb County Prosecutor's digital evidence library growth continues to set record**

Mount Clemens, MI - A digital evidence management platform launched last year by Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido already contains over 530,000 items of digital evidence, a 500% increase since June 2022. Managing digital evidence is a daunting task made possible with technology put in place by the Macomb County Prosecutor.

"This technology has been a game-changer in our pursuit of justice. It revolutionized how we handle crucial data, streamlining the process of collecting, organizing, and sharing digital evidence. We now wield the power of technology to build strong cases and ultimately secure more successful convictions, said Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido.

The volume of digital evidence has skyrocketed as a result of more police body-worn cameras, cell phone video, video security systems and more. The process by which prosecutors are legally required to share evidence with the defense is called "discovery." The Prosecutor's Discovery Unit routinely provides discovery within a few business days of a request. The Prosecutor's Office has never provided discovery this consistently fast, which is remarkable given the exponential increase in the volume of digital evidence.

Defense attorneys may request discovery on the Macomb County Prosecutor's website, even from court, or by texting the word "discovery" to 586-250-4090.

The system, called Evidence.com, eliminated the need for defense attorneys to visit the Prosecutor's Office to physically retrieve evidence. With a download link, discovery is shared securely, ensuring that all evidence remains protected. This innovative system streamlines the process of discovery and provides an audit trail, tracking who receives the evidence and when. In most instances, the delivery of discovery to the defense is now faster than ever before, significantly reducing the grounds for defense attorneys to assert they did not receive digital evidence timely from the county prosecutor.

A digital evidence library is not the only improvement Prosecutor Lucido made since January 2021. In 2023, the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office won seven Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties for enhancing services for Macomb County residents. In addition to successfully prosecuting crimes throughout the county, other progress includes:

- **Child support collections increased.** Prosecutor Lucido's office increased focus to collect child support from parents who owe \$5,000 or more. Thanks to support from the County Commission and County Executive, the office collected over \$323,000 so far this year for the direct benefit of Macomb County children.
- **Mental health assessments sought as a condition of bond in gun crime cases.** With this first-in-Michigan policy to seek mental health assessments as part of bond in *all* gun crime cases, Prosecutor Lucido recognizes that some defendants struggle with mental health issues, which might be addressed through early identification and provision of appropriate services before defendants get an opportunity to commit another crime with a gun.
- **School threats are taken seriously.** Prosecutor Lucido has authorized several school threat cases. "We promise to prosecute every one of these threats," said Lucido.
- **Conviction Integrity Unit exoneration.** This unit investigates claims of innocence to determine whether there is clear and convincing new evidence that the convicted defendant was not the person who committed the offense and to review claims of factual innocence based on new evidence. Thanks to support for this unit from the County Commission and County Executive, a person was exonerated this year.
- **Major Crimes Unit launched:** Prosecutor Lucido organized the top-ranked assistant prosecutors to focus on major crimes, and train more APAs to handle these types of cases.
- **Warrant Appeals Unit launched:** Victims and law enforcement officials are now given the right to have a second set of eyes to review cases where charges are denied, the first known unit of its kind in the state.
- **More interns equals more justice.** Prosecutor Lucido hosted over 200 law school and college interns, so far! Michigan Court Rules allow law students this exciting opportunity to handle court hearings under supervision, which helps the office move cases forward more quickly.
- **Paperless crime victim rights.** Prosecutor Lucido implemented the county's first paperless system for crime victims to request rights and notification. Crime victims may now request victim information via text message, or entirely online via the Prosecutor's Office Website.
- **Providing police training.** Prosecutor Lucido regularly sends assistant prosecutors to every police agency in Macomb County to provide training, including updates on recent court cases.

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