



News Release

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Kristen Thoms Joins Tri-County Biological Science Center Team as Forensic Biology Technical Leader

Charleston County is pleased to announce the hiring of Kristen C. Thoms as the forthcoming Tri-County Biological Science Center's Forensic Biology Technical Leader.

Kristen is a seasoned forensic biologist with more than 14 years of specialized experience in forensic serology and DNA analysis. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology and Master of Science in Forensic Science from George Mason University.

Her career experience spans a range of forensic applications including DNA extraction and analysis, development of forensic methodologies, databasing of convicted offender and arrestee profiles, and casework including property crimes, homicides, sexual assault backlog initiatives, and cold cases. Kristen has provided expert testimony in Superior Court in Washington, DC, is an American National Standards Institute National Accreditation Board technical assessor, has served on the Forensic Accreditation Council, and serves as a subject matter expert for standard development and various National Institute of Justice/Bureau of Justice Assistance grant funding peer review panels.

In her new role, Kristen will oversee technical operations and ensure the Tri-County Biological Science Center's adherence to high standards of laboratory practice and accreditation. Responsibilities will include reviewing methodologies, validating analytical procedures, maintaining oversight of training, and managing laboratory quality systems to align with evolving technologies and regulatory requirements.

"I'm honored to be joining the Charleston County team as we move toward the opening of the Tri-County Biological Science Center, an unprecedented local collaboration that will provide forensic analysis to public safety partners throughout the region," said Thoms. "The mission of this new facility goes beyond just processing evidence. By integrating the latest technologies and methodologies, we will be better able to support the criminal justice system. I'm excited to work alongside a talented team of professionals dedicated to the safety and well-being of our citizens, and I look forward to getting started."

"We're thrilled to welcome such a highly qualified and experienced professional to our growing team," said Tri-County Biological Science Center Director Tom Van Koughnett. "As our Tri-County Biological Science Center continues to take shape, it's critical that we bring in experts who not only have the technical skills to do the job, but also a deep commitment to advancing forensic science. With her extensive experience, impressive credentials, and dedication to the field, there's no question that Kristen fits that bill."

About the Tri-County Biological Science Center

The Tri-County Biological Science Center, a state-of-the-art forensic DNA laboratory, is the result of a committed partnership among Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties. The nearly \$20 million project, located at 3765 Leeds Avenue in North Charleston, will include the construction of a 20,000 square foot building, purchase of equipment, and onboarding of specialized staff. Construction began in June, with occupancy expected in first quarter 2026. Upon building completion, the laboratory will undergo a rigorous validation, training, and accreditation phase. The lab must receive accreditation before forensic casework can be accepted.

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), those needing assistance should contact Charleston County at (843) 202-6917 during regular business hours.

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