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NMSU genetic lab managed privately

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News Reporter

Private businessmen of El Paso recently partnered with New Mexico State University to expand the Genetic Testing Laboratory on campus.

According to the American Association of Blood Banks Web site, the NMSU Genetic Testing Lab is an accredited parentage testing facility.

Stefan Long, general manager of the lab, said he is working with the new partners, Jack Ellis and Bill White, to make the lab an option for forensic investigators in southern New Mexico. Long said the state crime labs are often overworked, and law enforcement officials will have the option of taking DNA tests to the NMSU lab.

Ellis said he made the investment with the hope that the lab will grow and turn a profit for everyone involved. He said the lab will progress faster under private management without governmental bureaucracy to interfere with the business process.

Long said the management officials of the lab plan to expand the size of the lab by four times its current size, and Ellis said he hopes to double the manpower of the lab over the next 12 months.

Currently seven full-time staff members and two part-time student employees work at the lab, Long said.

Ellis said there are no plans to expand outside of the NMSU campus and the lab will continue to hire NMSU students and professors.

Long said the management officials plan to make the lab one of the major genetic testing labs in the nation.

"It's not about where I would like to see the lab go, it's about where we have to take it," Long said.

The expansion of the lab is a major step closer to having a forensic science degree offered to NMSU students, Long said.

Ellis and White are involved in several businesses around the Southwest, including real estate, fast food and the oil industry.