

Texas Association of Property and Evidence Inventory Technicians

The History

By Kolene Dean, T.A.P.E.I.T. Founding President

During my third attendance at an International Association of Property and Evidence class in 1997, I realized what a need we had in our state for an organization like IAPE -- one that was dedicated to the research and training in Texas laws. I found myself standing in that class and declaring that we were going to start such an organization for Texas property and evidence personnel. Fred Perez from Amarillo Police Department and Joyce Marek from DPS Waco along with several others stood and said they would do whatever was needed to see this happen. There were many from all over the state that called and volunteered to do anything they could to help.

Our first meeting was held November 4, 1997 at the Hurst Police Department. Twenty-seven property officers from all over the state attended. The directors were appointed that day to lead the group until a time when an association could be formed and an election could be held. The first directors were Kolene Dean - Hurst PD, Jennifer German - College Station PD, Fred Perez - Amarillo PD, Joyce Marek - DPS Waco, Walter English - Eagle Pass PD and Bernadette Lambert - Denton County SO. Our goals and purpose for our organization were created at the first meeting.

OUR PURPOSE:

To promote professional education, laws, rules and guidelines for maintaining the integrity, chain of custody, and disposal of property and evidence.

OUR GOALS:

- Education and Training
- A change in the laws with clear and simple interpretation.
- Agreement between the District Attorney's Office and local law enforcement agencies on disposal and return of property and evidence to victims.
- Establish time limit for courts to notify agencies of disposition of property and evidence.
- Examples of standard operating procedures.

Our first training seminar was held in Austin at the Texas Department of Public Safety training facility on February 26 & 27, 1998. We had 100 professional property people from all over the state in attendance. By August of 1998, the paper work had been filed in Austin and we were officially known as the Texas Association of Property and Evidence Inventory Technicians (T.A.P.E.I.T.). Our State of Texas charter became official on December 29, 1998.

We continue to grow and have seen many of our goals established throughout the state. Personally, one of my most memorable experiences was when a small group of us appeared before the Texas Public Safety Council of the 77th Legislature to present our case in changing a few words in article 18.19 of the Code of Criminal Procedures. This small change would have a great impact on how law enforcement agencies disposed of

firearms. I was told by the State Representative that was presenting the bill not to expect this to happen on the first presentation. Fortunately, with great respect to State Representative Todd Smith, and with the backing of many people throughout Texas, we saw this change passed and signed by the Governor. I am honored and privileged to have been the individual to present the first change in the Texas State Law by TAPEIT.

Our motto from the start was “We need YOU and YOU need Us,” and I believe this still stands today. We need one another to exchange the valuable information we gather in our daily routines and to assure each other you are not alone in this battle to see daylight at the end of the tunnel.