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**Media Contact:** Angela Green                    **Date:** December 14, 2021

### LCSO Announces Implementation of New Technology to Identify Inmates

The Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) announces the successful implementation of a cost-effective and innovative iris biometric identification technology to identify offenders. The technology takes 15.1 seconds to use and can improve the safety of the public and staff by quickly and accurately confirming the identity of an offender. That information can then be shared just as fast with other agencies using the same technology.

The iris biometric technology captures the unique features contained in the human iris and compares those features against a database of individuals who have been previously enrolled in Leon County and in other participating law enforcement agencies across the nation.

"This cutting-edge iris biometric technology is another tool in the arsenal of capabilities we have to protect our citizens, especially from those who may try to alter their identities," said Sheriff Walt McNeil.

The camera, which uses near infrared light, takes a digital photograph that captures 268 individual unique characteristics in each eye simultaneously. The process takes just seconds and there is limited contact with an inmate to complete this biometric identification. Iris recognition is also 12 times more accurate than fingerprints. This new technology can also reduce the time it takes to capture and process a print, which in some cases can take hours, if not days to get results.

Iris biometrics will not replace fingerprinting or mugshots to identify inmates, but it is another tool to identify an inmate quickly. In today's world, which has been forever changed by the likes of COVID and all its variants, iris recognition is the best way of keeping inmates and Detention Facility staff safe by limiting physical contact.

Since going live on May 18, 2021, the Leon County Detention Facility has booked more than 5,800 inmates using iris biometrics. The iris database consists of more than 2 million images -- which is the largest iris database in North America used by jails and prisons to authenticate and positively identify inmates. LCSO joins almost 200 other Sheriff Offices and Department of Corrections across the nation who have already implemented this technology.

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