

New Equipment Aids Coroner in Death Investigations

The Kane County Coroner has acquired a new, high-tech X-ray device that will reduce costs and, in certain cases, offset the need for a full post mortem exam.

Last year the Coroner completed **330** autopsies. In the past, if an X-ray was necessary, the office transported the body to the local hospital, paid a fee to use the X-ray equipment and paid an additional fee for a certified technician to operate it.



“Having the X-ray equipment in house lets us operate more efficiently and frees up the hospital technician for medical issues involving the living,” said Kane County Coroner Rob Russell.

The X-ray machine will assist the Coroner’s office in screening a body for broken bones to determine abuse, finding the exact locations of a bullet in a gunshot victim or cuts from wounds suffered by a stabbing victim.

In some cases, a more extensive post mortem examination could be avoided as in the case of COVID death. COVID deaths typically reveal an image referred to as ‘ground glass’ inside the lungs.

“By using the X-ray equipment on site, we limit the time grieving individuals need to spend interacting with our office,” said Coroner Russell.

The new X-ray machine or device was recently purchased by Kane County at a cost of \$140,000.

In 2021, the Coroner’s staff moved from what has been called “one of the worst facilities in the state to one of the best.” The new 11,000 square foot space has allowed the Coroner to expand refrigerator and freezer storage, build a larger and more technically advanced autopsy room, have new office space for staff along with other amenities for the people who work inside the Coroner’s office.

“We are committed to taking good care of the individuals that come into our facility. We are committed to expedite our process so that families can chose a funeral home and start the process of saying goodbye as quickly as possible,” Coroner Russell said. “Where an identification is required, our office has dedicated a quiet and respectful space for people to view and make a positive identification of their loved ones in peace.”

The mission of the Kane County Coroner’s office is to determine the cause and manner of death; identify decedent; notifying the next-of-kin and assist survivors of the deceased with advocacy group referrals when appropriate.

The Coroner’s Office investigates all sudden as well as unusual or suspicious deaths in Kane County while striving to maintain a high level of sensitivity to the family of victims, assisting with professionalism in preparation of the deceased for final disposition by the funeral home of the family’s choosing.