



IPRC CONNECTIONS

Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

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IPR Center cites proud past, promising future during ten-year anniversary celebration



Saying he wants to “create more *operational* synergy with private industry,” Alex Khu, the newly named director of the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center) thanked industry leaders, the law enforcement community, trade organizations, and the Center’s 23 domestic and international partners for their unselfish contributions to a decade of success.

“Your leadership, vision, and commitment to the mission has paved the way for the next 10 years and beyond,” Khu told attendees at the Center’s recent 10-year anniversary celebration, adding that “none of this would have been possible without our partners.”

Khu’s remarks were echoed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Acting Deputy Executive Associate Director Alysa Erichs, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Executive Assistant Commissioner Brenda Smith and FBI Assistant Section Chief Aaron Seres, Criminal Investigative Division.

During the event, Khu signed a declaration of intent to support the International Chamber of Commerce’s (ICC) Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy, and expressed strong commitment to prevent the maritime transport of counterfeit goods. ICC launched this effort, which has been signed by shipping companies and freight forwarders and multinational brand owners in 2016 to address the issue of counterfeit goods being transported through shipping containers. The IPR Center is the first law-enforcement organization to formally pledge support of this initiative. (*photo l-to-r: Mark Seraydarian, Honda; Kristin Reif, Philip Morris International; Lev Kubiak, Pfizer; Adrienne Hahn, Chanel*)

Looking ahead, Khu outlined his vision for the next 10 years with a promise to “expand the footprint” of the Center with enhanced capabilities to launch new initiatives, generate more referrals, and work more closely with field offices, ultimately leading to more enforcement operations worldwide. More specifically, Khu wants a more robust engagement with private industry, including pharmaceuticals; automotive interests; consumer electronics; Department of Defense supply chains; sports merchandise; tobacco and textile, as well as the luxury industries.

Former IPR Center directors Marcy Forman, Bruce Foucart, Lev Kubiak, David Thompson and Robert Rutt joined Director Khu and more than 100 others at the event, including Special Agent Ken Rochford (right) who staffed one of many operational displays.



DNA samples used to help solve elephant poaching case



ICE HSI Singapore Regional Attaché Calvin Webb, his staff, Deputy Attaché Robert Lombardi and Assistant Attaché Eugene “Geno” Villanueva, coordinated with the government of Singapore to allow renowned conservation biologist and 2018 Dr. Albert Schweitzer medal recipient, Dr. Samuel Wasser to take DNA samples from a large seizure of ivory seized in Singapore. Lombardi, Villanueva, HSI Ho Chi Minh City Assistant Attaché Cory Dunne and HSI Ho Chi Minh City Foreign Service National Investigator Ngoc Tram Nguyen assisted Dr. Wasser in assembling, matching, cataloging and taking DNA samples from portions of the nearly 1800 pieces of elephant ivory. This DNA sampling, made possible with the assistance of IPR Center funding, will allow for cross-matching with DNA samples in the database at the University of Washington’s Center for Conservation Biology. It will also help determine within 300 square kilometers where the tusks were harvested in Africa, a huge benefit for law enforcement in those affected countries where poaching is rampant.

IPR Center hosts advanced training on IPR and trade fraud detection

The IPR Center recently presented an advanced training session at its facility in Arlington, Virginia. Personnel from HSI and CBP filled 30 seats for the HSI Intellectual Property and Trade Enforcement Investigations course. Under the direction of IPR Center National Program Manager Nadine Andrews, the two-week training session focused on IPR and trade fraud detection and investigations. HSI Acting Executive Associate Director Derek Benner addressed the group and acknowledged the cooperation among field agents and the importance of their role in achieving ICE’s mission. The attendees included HSI and CBP employees.

The course featured presentations from CBP managers, attorneys, regulatory auditors and program managers who were joined by ICE attorneys, IPR Center program managers and HSI special agents. Topics included the entry process, classification, markings, database systems, programs and operations managed by the IPR Center and case studies. Discussions also touched on the operations of CBP’s Centers of Excellence and Expertise and Commercial Enforcement Analysis and Response. The following representatives of rights holders and associations with an interest in multiple IP and commercial fraud issues made presentations: tobacco, steel, textile, automotive, cosmetics, sporting apparel/footwear, and outdoor equipment. Their presentations covered how to identify counterfeit items and how industry can assist HSI and CBP with – among other things – detecting and investigating commercial fraud and IP theft. The IPR Center will conduct another round of training this summer with two more classes scheduled in June and August.

California electronics distributor charged with selling counterfeit integrated circuits

The owner of PRB Logics Corporation, an Orange County-based seller of electronic components, has been arrested on federal charges alleging he sold counterfeit integrated circuits some of which could have been used in military applications. Rogelio Vasquez is charged in a 30-count indictment that alleges he acquired old, used and/or discarded integrated circuits from Chinese suppliers that had been repainted and remarked with counterfeit logos. The devices were further remarked with altered date codes, lot codes or countries of origin to deceive customers and end users into thinking the integrated circuits were new, according to the indictment. Vasquez then sold the counterfeit electronics as new parts made by manufacturers such as Xilinx, Analog Devices and Intel. The investigation is being conducted by ICE HSI, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the National Reconnaissance Office, Office of Inspector General. Here’s more: [Counterfeit Circuits](#)

CBP launches IPR Enforcement Donation Program, partners with Procter & Gamble

CBP has announced a new formal partnership arrangement with Procter & Gamble (P&G), as part of the [Donations Acceptance Program](#), to prevent counterfeit P&G products from entering the United States. P&G has donated (and will resupply as needed) testing devices and kits to help CBP officers and trade specialists quickly determine the legitimacy of various P&G products, reducing the possibility of counterfeit goods from entering the mainstream commerce. For more information on the DAP, or to learn more about how to enter into a formal partnership in support of enhanced CBP operations, you can visit dap@cbp.dhs.gov



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the “Report IP Theft” button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>.

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of *IPRC Connections*, please contact Chuck Jackson, charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov, or (703) 603-3941.