

Maricopa Lawyer

Clerk's Corner

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

A Look Ahead

The Clerk's Office is involved in numerous projects that will facilitate new or improved processes for practicing law in the Superior Court in Maricopa County. Technology continues to be the source of innovations in improving service to the bar and the public. The following initiatives provide a look ahead to the developments you will see in 2007.

Electronic Warrants

Electronic criminal bench warrants and civil arrest warrants were implemented at the end of April. When a judicial division orders a criminal bench warrant or civil arrest warrant, the order is created and sealed by the courtroom clerk and subsequently transmitted electronically to the Sheriff's Office. Warrants can be quashed electronically upon notice from the division. When an electronically transmitted warrant is quashed, the quashed warrant is electronically filed and docketed in the clerk's system. The electronic issuance and quashing of warrants has an advantage over paper processes in both speed and accuracy.

Electronic warrants use a verification technology that imprints an electronic seal that includes a unique number. Tracking the information on the electronic seal can identify who requested the warrant, the date and time of the request, and other administrative details. Tracking the quash information identifies who ordered the warrant quashed and other administrative information. The technology involved in bringing electronic warrants to reality in criminal and civil case types may translate to other electronic services in the future.

eFiling coming to Family Court

Plans are being reviewed to begin expanding eFile capabilities to subsequent documents filed in family court case types. If the pilot is approved in its proposed format, eFiling in family court could begin by the end of summer. Similar to the pilot program that was launched in general civil cases in 2005, the eFile pilot in family cases will start with a limited number of cases in two or three judicial divisions. It is anticipated that participation in the eFile pilot in family court will be permissive; if a judicial officer appears on the list of participating divisions, attorneys may eFile in that division. As in other case types, the initial documents to begin a family court case will be filed in paper. After the initial filings, subsequent documents may be filed electronically. Participating divisions will be listed on the Clerk's website when the pilot launches in family court: <https://efiling.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/help/edivisions.asp> .

This year began with historic changes in the practice of law in Maricopa County. The electronic court record, the expansion of minute entries by email and eFiling have all changed the way we interact with the courts. Many improvements have been accomplished and many more are on the way.