

Process Servers, Court and Clerk's Office Information and Exchange Presentation

April 8, 2003

Minutes

Welcoming Remarks

- Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court, welcomed the attendees. He encouraged them to forward agenda items to Lauri Thomas at lthomas@cosc.maricopa.gov

Credit Card Pilot Program

- Mr. Jeanes provided an update of the pilot that began on January 15, 2003 at the Customer Service Center. The Central Court Complex Family Court Filing Counter will be accepting credits cards this week and the other filing counters is the upcoming weeks. He clarified that the person filing must be in possession of the credit card, as it must be swiped. At this time only Visa and MasterCard are being accepted. A future goal is to set up debit card usage as well as other major credit cards. Another goal is to establish an "auto bill" program for "company users."

iCIS Updates

- Lauri Thomas, Document Management Administrator, informed the group that Criminal iCIS went on-line March 3, 2003. Staff have been experiencing a slow down in the last few days, but the Court's Judicial Information System (JIS) staff have been working diligently to resolve this problem. Criminal cases from 1995 and newer have been downloaded and are accessible. Criminal cases prior to 1995 have been archived and are being released to the database as the need occurs. The *L-Index* does allow search capability of pre-1995 Criminal cases to internal Clerk's Office staff.
- The public who search the database by name have experienced more difficulties than searching by case number. JIS has been contacted to resolve this situation.
- The next phase for iCIS is to identify and implement enhancements to all iCIS case types.
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) for an electronic filing pilot for Complex Litigation Cases is currently under review.
- Questions were raised about the document processing priorities. Ms. Thomas explained that new cases, affidavits of service, responses and judgments were priorities; "miscellaneous" documents are a lower priority. She advised that all judgments filed in, regardless of case number date, are being scanned (normally, only 2002 and 2003 case documents are scanned). Other concerns relating to the accuracy of information provided by the Office on document backlogs and/or document processing timeframes were raised. As backlog information changes daily, it is difficult to disseminate the information throughout the entire Office so everyone has the same information in an expedited manner. A better effort will be made in this regard.

Additional Northwest Case Transfers – Mid-June 2003

- Carol Schreiber, Associate Clerk, Customer Services, explained to better balance the judicial calendars and workloads, the Court will be transferring additional cases to the Northwest Regional Center. Approximately 80 Civil, 1,500 Probate and 800 Family Court cases from the Central Court Complex are being considered for transfer (based on zip code and other criteria). This will be the "third round" of transfers. It should occur in mid-June 2003.

Southeast Adult Court Boundaries

- Ms. Schreiber announced that also occurring in mid-June 2003 will be a stricter enforcement of the judicial boundaries, in accordance to Local Rules for Maricopa County, Rule 11 and Rule 12. In the near future, these Rules will need to be reviewed and changed to better allocate caseloads and eliminate case transfers at a later date. Process servers would like to see this information available

on the Web sites. Ms. Schreiber advised that Clerk's staff are currently in the process of creating a new coversheet for the various case types that will assist with the correct filing location.

- When asked about a file room at the Northwest Regional Center, Ms. Schreiber advised that available space is still an issue, so no plans are being made for one at this time. Again, electronic document management would be a solution to this problem.

Drop Off Copies of Affidavits of Service for Family Support Services – Reminder

- Linda Domanico, Support Services Orders Supervisor, was introduced to remind process servers to drop off copies of Affidavits of Service for Family Support Services directly to them (located on the 1st floor of the Central Court Building – Window #10).

Judicial Rotations

- Phil Knox, Family Court Administration, distributed a plan of Judicial Assignments, effective in June 2003. He announced that the document continues to undergo reviews and will most likely change prior to the implementation date. For that reason, it will not be made available via the Court's Webpage until it has been finalized (www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov). Rotations are scheduled to take place in mid-June, scheduled around the Judicial Conference on June 17th, 18th and 19th. Southeast Adult rotations are scheduled for June 23rd. Mr. Knox will attempt to provide updates as they occur. Process Servers were encouraged to contact Mr. Knox with any questions.
- Process servers were advised by certain Court Administrative staff that the phone list providing Judicial Officers and their Judicial Assistants would no longer be made available on the Court's Webpage. Mr. Knox will follow-up with Court Administrators on this issue.
- Other process servers asked that a computer be made available in the document depository location at the Central Court Complex so they could access case assignment information for deliveries to the appropriate Judicial Officer. Ms. Thomas advised that this was a part of the original plan when the internal depositories were established and that she will follow-up on expediting this request.

County Budget and Potential Impact on Services

- Mr. Jeanes advised that the impact of the State's budget situation on the County is unknown at this time. It may not be known until July 1st or later. As a result, all County Departments were requested to prepare three budgets: 1) At current levels, 2) at a 5% reduction of current level, and 3) at a 10% reduction of current level. Mr. Jeanes cautioned that potential budget cuts may have an impact on Clerk's Office service levels. He will keep process servers advised as information becomes available. He advised that updates would be provided in the Clerk's "Talk of the Town" publication. (Note: Please contact Cari Gerchick at cgerchick@cosc.maricopa.gov if you are interested in receiving electronic copies of this publication.) Ms. Gerchick is the Clerk's Office's Communications Director and liaison at the legislature.

Time and Date Changes for Meetings

- Mr. Jeanes had received information that these noon-hour meetings are difficult for process servers to attend. He asked the group for input on a more feasible time. After discussion, it was determined that the current meeting schedule is as convenient as any other time and meetings will continue to be held quarterly on Tuesday's, at noon. (Note: Remaining meeting dates for the year are July 8th and October 14th.)
- Other comments raised during this discussion were:
 - ✓ Difficulties with available parking under current construction conditions. Mr. Jeanes advised the group that parking is available at the Customer Service Center for their use.
 - ✓ Email notification of events and meetings. (Update: The Office is working on a process server's site for dissemination of information. Currently, there is no projected completion date.)

- ✓ Coordination with Justice Courts on events. Mr. Jeanes advised that meeting information is sent to the Justice Courts.

Process Servers Certification – Update

- Maureen Ramroth, Administrative Planning Manager, was introduced to provide an update on the Process Servers Certification process. Ms. Ramroth reminded the process servers to pick up their Certificate of Attendance form at the end of the meeting. She advised that credit cannot be given unless the process servers attend the entire session.
- Ms. Ramroth thanked the process servers for their patience and cooperation during the transition of this program to the Clerk's Office.
- She clarified that the ten hours of Continuing Education are required on an annual basis, from expiration date to expiration date, within the three-year licensing renewal timeframe. She informed the group that they would be responsible for retention of the continuing education documents for presentation upon renewal. Continuing education classes are versatile. A class may be certified by completion of the appropriate form that demonstrates how the information will assist in the performance of the service provided. Ms. Ramroth referred the group to the Supreme Court's Webpage at www.supreme.state.az.us for additional information. It is the Supreme Court that maintains the code for process servers. The Supreme Court does encourage input from process servers via their Webpage.
- Ms. Ramroth reviewed the most common complaints she has received.
 - ✓ Failure to communicate with client.
 - ✓ Failure to properly serve parties.
 - ✓ Client's misunderstanding of fees for services.
 - ✓ Service on parties' family members when they are not present when attempting service.
 - ✓ Hours of the day attempting to serve parties.
- Ms. Ramroth informed the process servers that all complaints are reviewed by the Civil Presiding Judge and it is important that they respond in writing by the designated due date. All complaints submitted will remain in the process server's file.
- Process servers advised that some justice courts are providing inaccurate information regarding process service fees. Ms. Thomas will forward this information to the Justice Court's Administrative Offices.

Other Items

- Mr. Jeanes asked process servers to refrain from having children hold their place in the filing counter lines. This has been reported on more than one instance.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.