

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

October 18, 2005

Minutes

Welcoming Remarks

- Michael Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court, was unable to attend the meeting due to his participation as host to delegates from Kosovo. Lauri Thomas, Document Management Administrator, welcomed the group. She commented that the Officials from Kosovo are meeting with the Clerk, Superior Court Officials and Federal District Court Officials.
- Ms. Thomas announced the restructure of the Clerk's Office that became effective on August 29th. Gordon Mulleneaux, Associate Clerk of Financial Services, now oversees Ms. Thomas' area of File Counters, Docket and EDM scanning functions. Carol Schreiber, Associate Clerk of Customer Services, will continue to oversee Public Records, License Services, Exhibits, Appeals, Juvenile and EDM initiatives.
- Ms. Thomas proceeded to introduce Merriel Trombley, Civil File Counter Supervisor at the Central Court Complex – effective August 1st and Anna Valenzuela, Family Court File Counter Supervisor at the Central Court Complex – effective October 11th.
- Ms. Thomas announced that search functions of the docket, both Internet and Public Access Terminals at the Clerk's Office Public Records areas, now have the capability to search Criminal cases by date(s) of birth. Users will need to provide at least an initial of the first and last names' fields to enable this functionality. Some Process Servers advised they still have difficulties with the Internet searches and Ms. Thomas advised that CTS (Court Technology Services) is continually working on improvements. It was suggested that an "alt text" code would assist greatly with searches. Ms. Thomas provided handouts of screen shots of the new queries. The group inquired about access to Justice Court cases and on-line inquiries. Ms. Thomas informed them she was not aware of availability in this area. It was asked that this item be placed on the next agenda.

E-File Update

- Ms. Thomas announced that the RFP process has been completed and three vendors have been qualified to provide E-File services. Currently, meetings are being set with each vendor to finalize all requirements.
- There are currently four Judicial Officers participating in the Criminal E-File pilot – three DUI Commissioners and Judge Donahoe's Division. Judge Swann's Civil Division has been operating as the Civil E-File Pilot since June 20th. Approximately 40 cases have been designated as E-File cases and there is discussion regarding the expansion of the Pilot within Judge Swann's Division as well as other Civil Divisions.
- The Process Servers expressed an interest in E-Filing Affidavits of Service. Ms. Thomas indicated this has already been identified as an anticipated request and as E-Filing is expanded outside of the established Attorney firms operating in the Pilot, this will be considered.

Justice Courts Information

- Brian Karth, Limited Jurisdiction Courts Administrator, and Dennis Metrick, Justice Courts Operations Director, were unable to attend the meeting. Topics requested for discussion at the next quarterly meeting were:
 - On-line access to Justice Court case information.
 - Process Servers notarized signature requirements on Family Court Case Affidavits of Service on Orders of Protection.

Northeast Court Update

- Ms. Thomas introduced the Clerk's Office Managers at the Northeast Facility; Sheri Jaffe, Document Management and Gerri-Lynn Longbein, Courtroom Services.

- Ms. Jaffe advised the attendees that Judicial Officers' drop boxes are located in the lobby area, adjacent to the information booth. An external Depository Box is also available at the facility. Currently, there is no Drop Box for Justice Court items until October 24th, when they are scheduled to open at Northeast. The Scottsdale, Northwest Phoenix and Northeast Phoenix Justice Courts are still scheduled to be housed at the facility.
- Process Servers inquired about delivery of document copies to the Northeast Court Judicial Officers when the originals are filed at another location, and vice versa. Linda Sandbloom of Family Court Administration clarified that Family Court documents are being routed to the appropriate Judicial Officer by Family Court Administration, regardless of the location where the documents are received. She advised it is not possible to provide a specific delivery date. Ms. Sandbloom will relay this information to the other Court Administrative Offices to ensure they are processing in the same fashion. It was noted that Juvenile matters can be filed at Juvenile facilities only. (Durango and Southeast)
- Ms. Jaffe informed the attendees there is no file room at this facility, consequently all records are located at the Customer Service Center. This further facilitates the need for an electronic record. Public Access Terminals are available at the Northeast facility.
- No Criminal hearings are held at this facility. (Criminal matters are calendared at the Downtown and Southeast Courts only.)

Court Administration Topics

- Linda Sandbloom, Family Court Navigator from Family Court Administration was introduced to address Court Administration topics.
 - ✓ Judicial Rotations Update
 - Ms. Sandbloom provided a handout of the most recent Family Court Judicial Assignments.
 - ✓ Post-Decree Child Support Court (Orders to Appear)
 - On October 1st a new process began in Family Court to facilitate quick resolution of post-decree child support matters. This pertains to parties seeking a simplified child support modification or other modifications of child support. This new process will provide litigants with an opportunity to reach an agreement with a Conference Officer, but if no agreement is reached, a hearing with a Judicial Officer will be held immediately to resolve the issue and enter a final order the same day. If an agreement is reached in Expedited Services, a written stipulation will be signed by a Judicial Officer before the parties leave the Courthouse. Upon filing a petition, parties will receive (immediately) an Order to Appear (issued by Expedited Services) from Expedited Services set for 30 to 45 days from the filing date. Expedited Services staff will be available for filings that occur by close of business. Because timing is a critical issue with the Post-Decree Child Support Court, it is imperative that documents be served quickly. Ms. Sandbloom advised papers must be served no less than TEN business days before the Court hearing date. She also noted that the Court suggests that Process Servers consider alternative electronic means (emails and websites) to inform the public of their services.
 - Ms. Sandbloom addressed issues with Orders of Protection filed with the Family Violence Center. A phone call is made to the Petitioner regarding the hearing and it is the Defendant's prerogative to determine method of service; it is not mandatory to use a Process Server for service.

Other Items

- It was clarified that the zip codes of the Administrative boundaries for the Maricopa County Judicial District have been established and are being enforced via Administrative Order 2005-078. This Order is available on the Court's Website at:
 - <http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/adminOrders/2005/ao2005-078.pdf>**
- Darlene Pierson, Process Server Coordinator, answered questions regarding acceptable Continuing Education credits. Process Servers stated that some classes they believed were previously approved are not being accepted at the time of renewal. Ms. Pierson clarified that all credits (30 / 10 per year) must be documented at the time of license renewal or they will be declined by the Judge during review. There was only one instance she is aware of where a specific class was "rejected" and it was related to

a Defensive Driving class taken as a requirement for a citation – credits cannot serve a multi-purpose. It was requested that Nancy Swetnam, Director of Certification and Licensing Division at the Administrative Offices of the Court, and / or Judge Baca be invited to attend the next quarterly meeting to answer questions about classes certified for Continuing Education requirements for renewal purposes.

- Having no additional items, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.