

Maricopa Lawyer

Clerk's Corner

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Looking Back and Forward

In 2009, the Clerk's Office and local attorneys continued to see changes in the Superior Court. Despite decreased funding, an extended hiring freeze, staffing shortages and increased workload, the Clerk's Office created efficiency through the implementation of several key projects, leveraging technology to help the Clerk's Office do more with less. The following summaries demonstrate some of the highlights of 2009.

Permissive eFiling. Though technically made available in December of 2008, eFilings steadily increased throughout 2009, providing increased efficiency and lower costs for both attorneys and the Clerk's Office. eFilings increased from approximately 150 per day in December 2008 to an average of over 450 eFilings per day in November 2009. eFilings are accepted in all general civil cases, the criminal trial divisions and in several family court divisions. Judicial divisions that accept eFilings print language at the end of minute entries stating "This case is eFiling eligible."

Subpoenas Online. Through a partnership with the State Bar of Arizona, attorneys can now have a civil subpoena issued 24 hours a day in any county around the state. Details are online at www.myazbar.org/subpoenas.

eFiling survey. Approximately 500 attorneys and legal support staff responded to an eFiling survey, providing the Clerk's Office with valuable input and insight for the current and future versions of eFiling.

Social media. To reach a broader section of the legal community, the Clerk's Office started posting events and information using Twitter and Facebook accounts online. Both have been useful for publicizing services, updates and office closures, both planned and unexpected.

Southeast facility improvements. The Mesa adult facility was reconfigured over the summer to improve the file counter and customer service areas of the Clerk's Office.

Email address requirement. By Administrative Order, the Supreme Court directed all attorneys to have and maintain an email address for official court documents. This requirement made it possible for the Clerk's Office to increase participation in the electronic minute entry distribution system.

eAppeals. Pursuant to a Supreme Court Administrative Order, the Clerk's Office started a pilot project to electronically file the Superior Court record with the Court of Appeals, Division One.

eFile training. Between CLE's, monthly demonstrations at the Clerk's Office and onsite visits to law firms and other legal community organizations, the Clerk's Office demonstrated the eFiling system to hundreds of lawyers and legal support staff in and beyond Maricopa County.

ECR Online and Arbitrator access. Dozens more attorneys registered with the Electronic Court Record Online to view the public record remotely from their home or office. This valuable service was extended to arbitrators as well, allowing them to view the public records filed in a case as they are posted to the docket, rather than receive a paper copy of the record that is only up-to-date as of the date printed.

In 2010, the Clerk's Office looks forward to further advancements in technology and the efficiencies that will result. In addition, the new cash receipting system now in place allows American Express as a payment option. The 2010-2012 strategic plan for the office is available on the Clerk's website and communicates the strategic direction the office will take over the next three years to overcome difficult issues and to achieve specific goals. To view the complete strategic plan for the Clerk's Office, go to <http://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/news/StratPlanFY10-12FINAL.pdf>.

Thank you for the successes and developments we experienced in 2009 and we all look forward to working together throughout 2010 and beyond.