

Maricopa Lawyer

Clerk's Corner

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

Updates from the Clerk's Office

Each new year brings changes for all of us. I am enthusiastic about the changes and opportunities taking place in the Superior Court and with the Clerks across the state. Being in a state of constant change, there are growing pains from time-to-time, but the Clerk's Office is well-prepared and building on prior years of successes with technology. Below are a series of events taking place in Maricopa County that will bring direct or indirect changes to the Clerk and your practice.

Additional Judges Named to Civil E-filing Pilot

In 2006, e-filing will continue to expand in general civil court. Four additional divisions will join the electronic filing pilot in Superior Court. Judges Dunevant, Hilliard, Katz, and Schneider will begin designating cases by minute entry to take part in the pilot. If your case is selected, you will receive a minute entry on the case indicating when e-filing will be available and when it will become mandatory. Only cases notified by minute entry of their participation in the pilot are allowed to electronically file. The pilot will continue to expand into additional divisions until e-filing is available throughout the civil casetype. At the same time, the Clerk and Court will analyze the impact and planning implementation of e-filing in other casetypes. Pilots in those casetypes will take place throughout the year.

Minute Entry Drop Boxes Discontinued

The attorney minute entry drop boxes in the Clerk's distribution center were discontinued at the first of the year. Attorneys who were picking up their minute entries from the drop boxes will now receive them by regular mail, or may sign up to receive their minute entries electronically.

The Clerk's Minute Entry Electronic Distribution System (MEEDS) is one of the Office's earliest success stories with using technology to improve service. Over 3,300 attorneys in Maricopa County currently receive minute entries by email from the MEEDS process. MEEDS has proven to be a fast, reliable and efficient way for legal counsel to save time and improve communication in their cases at Superior Court. To sign up for electronic distribution of minute entries, a downloadable form is available online at the Clerk's website at <http://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/faxondemand/111.pdf> . You are also encouraged to contact the Clerk's Office distribution center at 602.506.7773 for more information on MEEDS.

Sensitive Data Form Implemented

Effective January 1, 2006, Rule 43(G) of the Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure was implemented. Before filing, this rule requires that sensitive data be omitted or otherwise redacted from any family court filing, unless specifically requested by the court. Sensitive data requested by the court must be on a sensitive data form, which the Clerk maintains as a confidential record, not subject to public review.

Rule 43(G) was written in conjunction with pending Supreme Court Rule 123. The implementation of Rule 43(G) is being monitored and will assist a review committee in preparation of a report to the Supreme Court on the implementation of a sensitive data form in all casetypes. When amended Rule 123 is implemented, it will affect several filings in every casetype. More information will be printed in this column as it becomes available.

Orders of Assignment shall contain sensitive data, but are closed to the general public. In Maricopa County, the Clerk's Office maintains electronic images of documents, and this rule allows the paper version of the sensitive data form to be destroyed. This is a significant change because attorneys and unrepresented parties must closely monitor their documents prior to filing to ensure sensitive data is not inadvertently recorded in the public record. It should be noted that the Clerk's Office will not inspect filings to ensure compliance, and the Clerk's Office does not intend to reject documents based on this rule. A sensitive data form will be included with Self-Service Center packets distributed by the Trial Courts.

New Administrative Offices for the Clerk

On December 8, Maricopa County held a "Topping-Out Ceremony" for the Downtown Justice Center, where the final steel girder was placed on the top of the new justice center. The five-story building will house nine county departments, including the Clerk of the Superior Court's administrative offices, and five justice courts. The facility is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2006.

New Service at Northeast Court

The Clerk's Office is now processing passport applications at the Northeast Regional Court Center. Within the complex, the Clerk's Office provides a filing counter with six windows to serve customers. The Northeast Office will accept filings for Civil, Family, Probate, and Tax cases, but will not accept filings in Juvenile or Criminal cases. The Clerk's Office is located within the Northeast Office at 18380 North 40th Street, Suite 120, Phoenix, Arizona 85032, just east of State Route 51 at the Union Hills exit. For additional information about Clerk's services at the Northeast Office, contact 602.506.3360.