

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

## **Juror-fund fee increase and improving your results with electronic filing**

### **The Lengthy Trial Fund Returns**

Despite the article's title, the "fee increase" is the return of a preexisting fee. The statutory authority for the Lengthy Trial Fund fee was repealed by the terms of the underlying statute at the end of last year. The administrative arm of the Supreme Court notified the legislature of this oversight and the legislature voted to reestablish the fee. Although the bill passed with an emergency clause, making it effective upon the governor's signature, the Supreme Court established an implementation date of May 19, 2014. The date-specific implementation allowed the Clerks to update their systems and notify the legal community and the public in advance of the return of the fee. The Lengthy Trial Fund allows jurors to receive a portion of their lost pay when sitting on trials that last more than five days.

### **Tips for improving e-filing**

Alas, there is no national standard for electronic filing. Requirements in federal court may not be allowed in state court, or vice versa. In Maricopa County, at least, both the Clerk's eFiling Online website and AZTurboCourt accept documents in PDF format and proposed orders in MS Word.

The guidelines for eFiling in Superior Court cases in Maricopa County apply to both eFiling systems and are conveniently available online. Updates are made as needed and bookmarking the eFiling Guidelines online is a practical way to ensure filings are in accordance with the current requirements.

This article addresses three of the most common eFiling errors or missteps and how to avoid them. With a few adjustments, these recommendations can be applied in all eFiling situations. Fewer errors and more consistency translate directly to lower cost and a better final product presented to your judicial officer.

The Clerk's Office is seeing an increase in eFilings that don't conform to the eFiling Guidelines posted online. Non-conforming documents can be rejected, resulting in missed filing deadlines.

The most common error is attempting to file documents that are over the 10MB size limitation. As technology has improved, full-color documents and images and the clarity resolution that is available have resulted in much larger file sizes. Files that are larger than 10MB cannot be easily opened and reviewed. From the practitioner's standpoint,

although a large file may make it through the eFiling system, the judicial officer receiving the document may have to wait longer for the document to open before they can review and take action on the filing.

Reducing large files will help the speed of filing and review throughout the process. You can learn tips for reducing the size of files by doing an internet search with key words and phrases like “shrink pdf,” “reduce file size,” and “make file smaller.” Newer versions of Adobe Acrobat’s PDF-making software have an option to make files smaller. To use this feature, save the original document as a PDF, then use the commands within the PDF document under “File, Save As, Reduced Size PDF.”

Another error is password-protected documents that are filed without first removing the password protection. The Clerk’s Office is unable to process a document if a password is required to unlock the document. These documents are rejected with a note from the review clerk to remove the password protection and resubmit.

Documents that contain hyperlinks, bookmarks, and other navigational aids to external networks such as cited court cases, court rules, laws, and codes are allowed but may not function. Filers are advised that links within documents and the content they link to are not considered part of the official record. Links within documents may be disabled as part of the eFiling process and the conversion from native format to PDF. The Guidelines direct that hyperlinks contain a text reference to the target of the link to help offset this issue.

To review the eFiling Guidelines that apply to all eFiling in the Superior Court in Maricopa County, visit the Clerk’s website at <https://efiling.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/efilingguidelines/>.