

Maricopa Lawyer

Clerk's Corner

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

Improvements to Criminal and Civil Warrants

Recently the Clerk's Office completed the implementation of an electronic seal process for criminal bench warrants and civil arrest warrants. Issuing warrants is an ideal process for automation, but had historically involved applying a raised seal to paper. In fiscal year 2005-2006, over 14,000 warrants were manually created and issued by courtroom clerks. After applying a raised seal, the warrants were hand-delivered to the Sheriff's Office.

To allow automation, the electronic seal was developed to assign a unique identifier to each eSeal that the clerk can verify was electronically applied to each specific warrant. The Integrated Criminal Justice Information System's agency developed a "Smart Warrants" program that automatically retrieves the defendant's name, physical descriptors, case information and other details and inputs that information onto the electronic warrant. Previously, the courtroom clerk had to research and input these details manually on every warrant issued. Each step of the warrant process required data entry and separate forms for the creation, filing, and entry of information into the crime information center databases, as well as physical movement of paper documents from courtroom to sheriff. With the volume of warrants issued, the manual process could take a significant amount of time.

Courtroom clerks are now able to initiate completely electronic criminal bench warrants and civil arrest warrants by creating an original PDF version of the warrant that incorporates the unique electronic seal. Once filed by the clerk, the sheriff's office receives notice that a warrant has been issued and the sheriff's office is able to view the information and the image of the warrant immediately. This eliminates the need to print paper, apply a raised seal, and physically deliver the warrant to the sheriff. The result is a data exchange that passes timely and accurate information regarding warrants between the court and the sheriff's office, reducing the potential for people to be released or arrested in error while waiting for paperwork.

In addition to the creation of electronic warrants containing a unique electronic seal, courtroom clerks now have the ability to electronically notify the sheriff of quashed warrants. If the warrant were issued electronically, the electronic quash process locates the original electronic warrant, stamps "quashed" on the PDF original, and is then filed electronically. One benefit of electronic quashing of warrants is the improved speed it allows in removing warrants from the crime information center databases. The sooner a warrant is recalled, the less potential there is for someone to be arrested on a warrant that appears from the databases to still be outstanding.

Michael Jeanes Receives Award from Supreme Court

Staff note: At a ceremony on June 20, Michael Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court for Maricopa County, was recognized by the Arizona Supreme Court with the Administrative

Director's Administration of Justice Award. The award is presented to an individual who has made substantial contributions to improving public trust and confidence in the Arizona court system and for outstanding achievement in the administration of justice by improving services to those who use the court system. The Clerk's Office congratulates Michael on the recognition of his continuing personal and office-wide commitment to public service.