

## Maricopa Lawyer

### Clerk's Corner

*By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court*

#### ***eFiling Expands to Attorneys in Criminal Case Types***

As eFiling pilots gain momentum, several judicial officers have asked for greater expansion. Currently, county agencies are eFiling in criminal case types. The County Attorney, Public Defender, and Indigent Defense agencies have been eFiling in DUI and select criminal courts since December 2003. Two DUI divisions in downtown Phoenix and all five criminal trial divisions at the Southeast court facility are accepting eFilings.

Now all 16 criminal trial divisions at the Court's downtown Phoenix location are designated eFiling divisions, allowing for permissive eFiling. Initially, eFiling in criminal cases will only be available to county agencies, but the Clerk and Court will expand capability to private attorneys in the coming months.

Criminal case types are a logical step to expand eFiling to the public, due in part to the low percentage of unrepresented parties compared to other case types. For more information on eFiling and for links to the eFiling website and training materials, visit the Clerk's website at [www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov](http://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov).

#### ***Back-scanning Court Record Underway***

This summer, the Clerk's Office contracted with a vendor to scan and image inactive case files. Civil cases from 1998 and 1999 will soon be available electronically. The project seeks to convert between five to six million pages of paper to electronic images in this phase, with an estimated 35 million images that could be captured from all inactive cases, regardless of case type or year.

The success of the electronic court record (ECR) has encouraged more judicial officers to turn to their computer for immediate access to court filings instead of ordering a paper file. As the ECR expands, the demand for more electronic records has increased. Currently, the Office's digital repository contains nearly 11 million electronic documents, containing tens of millions of imaged pages. These include filings in Criminal, Civil, Family Court, Mental Health, and Tax cases dating back to 2002, and Probate cases dating to 1997. In the future, the project will involve converting the electronic images to microfilm. The back-scanning project will also provide essential space at the Clerk's Office, as we continue to process over 40,000 pieces of paper each business day.

Technology continues to shape the operations of the court system and the direction and potential of the larger legal community. Continued cooperation and input allows our Office to manage change and use technology to make improvements.