

Maricopa Lawyer

Clerk's Corner

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

Technology Marches On

The Clerk's Office is pleased to report that technology continues to improve the service and interactions the public receives with the Superior Court in Maricopa County. The Clerk's Office recently received international recognition for its website; eFiling is coming to family court; and limited access to the electronic court record online will soon be available to the bar.

Top 10 Website

The Clerk's Office was recently recognized by *Justice Served* for having one of the top 10 court websites in the world. *Justice Served* is an alliance of court management and justice experts who reviewed nearly 4,000 court websites throughout the world and selected the Clerk's website as one of the 10 finest.

Criteria used to determine website winners were: Court Tasks, Forms, Self Help, Financial Transaction, Indexing, Web Functionality, Links, Aesthetics, Navigation, Finding the Site, Extras, High Impact, Recent Updates, and Feedback. According to *Justice Served*, the current winners are "the ultimate models of court online services in the world." Specific to the Clerk's website, the judges recognized "top notch features and electronic access that is truly best of class."

This is the second time in the nine-year history of the awards that the Clerk's Office received a "Top 10" website award. Other American jurisdictions recognized for their websites were in Pennsylvania, Nevada, Florida and North Carolina. International award winners were the Subordinate Courts of Singapore (#1), two courts in Australia and one court in Ireland. The Clerk's website has a customer survey and a "contact us" feature, both of which allow the office to continually evaluate suggestions for improvement.

eFiling in Family Court

Electronic filing (eFiling) in the Superior Court in Maricopa County continues its march forward. eFiling in Family Court is anticipated for implementation this Fall. The pilot project will debut in three judicial divisions and poses unique challenges. As distinguished from other case types, Family Court involves a greater likelihood of pro se participation, content designated sensitive by court rule and statute, and filing fees that continue well beyond the initiation of the case.

eFiling was implemented in Maricopa County in 2003. At that time the project was limited to complex civil litigation cases and was processed by a third-party vendor. Since 2003, the Clerk's Office developed an eFiling system to directly process filings in criminal and general civil cases. Although eFiling is not available in all criminal and civil judicial divisions or juvenile case types, the pilot program continues to expand. Third-party vendors will offer services and functions unavailable through the Clerk's system

and will begin accepting eFilings in general civil cases this month, giving the filing public a choice in the way they interact with the Superior Court in Maricopa County.

ECR Online

Access to the electronic court record (ECR Online) will be available this Fall. The Clerk's Office will allow attorneys direct access to the court records on cases in which they are the attorney of record. This will reduce the need to send runners for copies of paper records and improve the speed and efficiency of case management. Access to the ECR is not a substitute for serving documents, but rather a customer service initiative. The Clerk's Office will continue to work with third-party vendors who can also provide access to the court record, as well as offer additional functions, support and service features. For more information, visit the Clerk's website at www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov.