

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

### **Things to be thankful for**

What do global conflicts, adoptions, climate change and electronic records have in common? They all offer opportunities to express your gratitude during the Thanksgiving month. The Clerk's Office is thankful for many things, including you, our customers.

Before getting too far into the article, the global conflict reference can be explained. Veterans' Day is recognized in November. This holiday is a chance to remember those who have given their hearts, minds, bodies, lives and more to maintain the best of this country's ideals and potential. It is a day to thank those who have committed to doing this in the past, today, and tomorrow. Our thanks go not only to those in the military, but to their friends and families who maintain during their absences and succeed and suffer loss with them. And we are thankful for their dedication and hard work at home and abroad.

November is also a time for new beginnings. Hundreds of children and their families will take the last step in making their family bonds official at National Adoption Day. Judges, staff, extended family and others will meet on Nov. 22 to publicly celebrate what is otherwise a closed hearing to finalize adoptions. This annual event takes place at the juvenile court on Durango Street in Phoenix. For more information, visit <http://maricopanad.org/>.

1-1-07. The Clerk's Office spent months preparing the legal community for January 1, 2007. This was the effective date Arizona's Supreme Court gave for making the electronic image of records the official court record in the superior court in Maricopa County. Later that week there was also buzz after Apple's Steve Jobs announced something called an iPhone.

Since 1-1-07, the Clerk's Office has introduced the electronic court record online (ECR Online) that allows parties and their attorneys to remotely access the records in their cases from anywhere they have an internet connection. Public access terminals at Clerk locations around the Valley and back-scanning documents quickly made it possible for customers to review records without waiting for paper files to be pulled, if the files weren't already checked out to judicial staff. The Clerk's eFiling Online system allowed parties and attorneys to electronically file in civil cases, then criminal cases, then family court and tax cases.

September's historic and damaging rainfall reached some paper records but could have been much worse if the Clerk had not transitioned to electronic records when it did. The Clerk's Office and the legal community have shown plenty of gratitude for the ease and

efficiency of electronic records and processes and have shown more than a little patience in continuing these advancements.

Lastly, climate change was included not as a political lightning rod, but as a lighthearted tip-of-the-hat to the winter season we all look forward to. Students, retirees, tourists, and travelers from near and far will join us in the Valley for several months. Some of them will take part in our legal system while they are here, but we will all be sharing thankfulness for the streets, services and weather we enjoy now that the climate has changed.

You no doubt have a list of things you are thankful for. November is a good time to reflect on what has been accomplished this year, thank those who help you in ways both big and small, and to make a final push for those things yet to be accomplished before year's end. The Clerk's Office is thankful for its professional and dedicated staff and for all our partners in the legal system.