

By Michael K. Jeanes, Clerk of the Superior Court

There's no skating on thin ice when it comes to customer service

Part of innovation and customer service is being where there is a need. Hockey great Wayne Gretzky is credited with saying "A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be." In the relatively near future, court customers will be able to take advantage of Clerk services at a Southwest Regional Center. Long-time practitioners and residents may find it hard to believe the Clerk's Office currently operates in a dozen locations around the Valley. In the spirit of customer service, this article looks back at one regional location and one customer service tool that recently passed milestone anniversaries and how they are serving customers today.

The Northeast Regional Court Center, located near Highway 51 between Bell Road and Union Hills Drive, recently reached its 10-year anniversary. When the Office opened, it was staffed with 34 Clerk's office employees. On its first day of operation, the Office had 30 cash receipting transactions totaling \$2,530 at the filing counter. Ten years later, the Northeast location is staffed with 38 Clerk's office employees and had 470 one-day cash receipting transactions totaling over \$30,000. Clerk's office services at this location include access to public records; issuing marriage licenses; processing passport applications; and filing counters for civil, family, and probate court. Other adult-court filings can be processed through the external filing depository box onsite.

Fifteen years ago, filing depository boxes were a new and welcome innovation. The Clerk's office installed the first external filing box inside the former Madison Street parking garage, where the South Court Tower now stands. The filing boxes allow the public to file documents 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. In its first few weeks, the first external filing box averaged 10 filings per day. Today there are four external filing boxes and two internal filing boxes for convenience and to handle overflow during the busiest times. This past fiscal year, the Clerk's office received more than 26,000 filings from the external boxes and more than 83,000 filings from the internal boxes, for a combined total of nearly 110,000 filings.

External filing boxes are currently located in downtown Phoenix at the 4th Avenue entrance to the County Administration Building, at the north entrance of the Southeast Court Complex in Mesa, at the main entrance to the Northwest Regional Court Center in Surprise, and at the main entrance to the Northeast Regional Court Center in Phoenix. Internal filing boxes are located in the main lobby of the Central Court Building in downtown Phoenix, in the Probate counter lobby of the Old Courthouse in downtown Phoenix, and in the main lobby of the Northeast Regional Court Center. For more detail about locations and filing procedures for the depository boxes, see the Clerk's website at http://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/alternative_filing.asp.

Regional court locations and filing depository boxes have become part of our local court culture over the last 10 and 15 years. Their value and benefits have been proven over time and are expected to maintain the customer service and access that the public and practitioners appreciate. With a Southwest Regional Court being planned, and improved electronic filing and access always in development, the Clerk's office expects to keep reaching for where the customer service puck is going to be.