

THE

BRIEF

Vol. 5, No. 8

An electronic update for the legal community providing a brief look at news in the Clerk of the Superior Court's Office



August 2009

Michael K. Jeanes,
Clerk of the Superior Court

Rejected Civil Filings

Clerk of the Court Michael Jeanes recently advised the process server and runner communities that, effective Sept. 1, 2009, the Clerk's Office will reject new civil filings that do not have the latest statewide civil cover sheet completed and signed by the filing attorney. Maricopa County's version of the latest civil cover sheet has been required since January 1, 2009, but older cover sheets are still being attached to some new civil filings. The practice of completing and attaching a new cover sheet to the signed, older cover sheet, while at the file counter, will end on August 31. If your firm uses a service to file documents at the Clerk's Office and the new cover sheet is not complete, they will be rejected based on enforcement of the cover sheet requirement. The Maricopa County version of the required civil cover sheet is maintained online in PDF and Word format at <http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/SuperiorCourt/Self-ServiceCenter/Forms/alphaList.asp#civil>.

Smaller is better

All scanning and document conversion hardware and software should have adjustable settings to optimize your filings. The Clerk's Office has recently received electronically-filed documents that have tested the system and produced mixed results: One document contained over 200 pages of text and its file size was over 5MB (megabytes) - a very large document that can take extra time for the judicial officer to see its image in the court record. Another document also contained over 200 pages of text, but its file size was approximately 2MB, a much more compact version of a similar document. When scanning documents from paper to an electronic image, or when converting a document from its original format to PDF (portable document format), the Clerk's Office recommends settings that produce a file size smaller than 5MB. Kilobytes (KB) are smaller than MB file sizes. For example, the average issue of *The Brief* has a small file size of 51KB. High resolution settings exist, but smaller file sizes have proven adequate for text and graphic documents filed in Superior Court. Check your scanned and converted documents before filing to review the document's file size and ensure its image quality. For any document, click "File" and "Properties" or "Document Properties" to see the "File Size." For assistance with hardware or software settings, review the product manual, contact your service provider, or search the internet for the steps necessary to change the default settings. Electronic file size limitations exist in federal courts, and having these size limitations in place for all filings provides consistency and ease of use.

File Counter Hours

When filing at one of the Clerk's file counters in Superior Court, sort documents by filings with fees being paid and those that do not require fees to be paid. Clerk staff typically first handle filings that require processing a fee through the cash management system. It is best to file documents in the mornings and early afternoons, particularly for civil cases, where filings have increased significantly. All file counter lines close at 5:00 p.m. and clerks stop processing filings for the day at 5:30. At that time, customers who are still in line with filings yet to be processed are directed to the night depository boxes. Documents can be filed at several internal filing boxes during regular business hours, or at night depository boxes, available 24 hours per day, at Clerk's Offices around the Valley. With civil filings increasing and staffing levels impacted by ongoing budget declines, wait times have increased since last year. Sorting documents is one way to improve the customer's experience and to reduce wait times at any hour of the day.