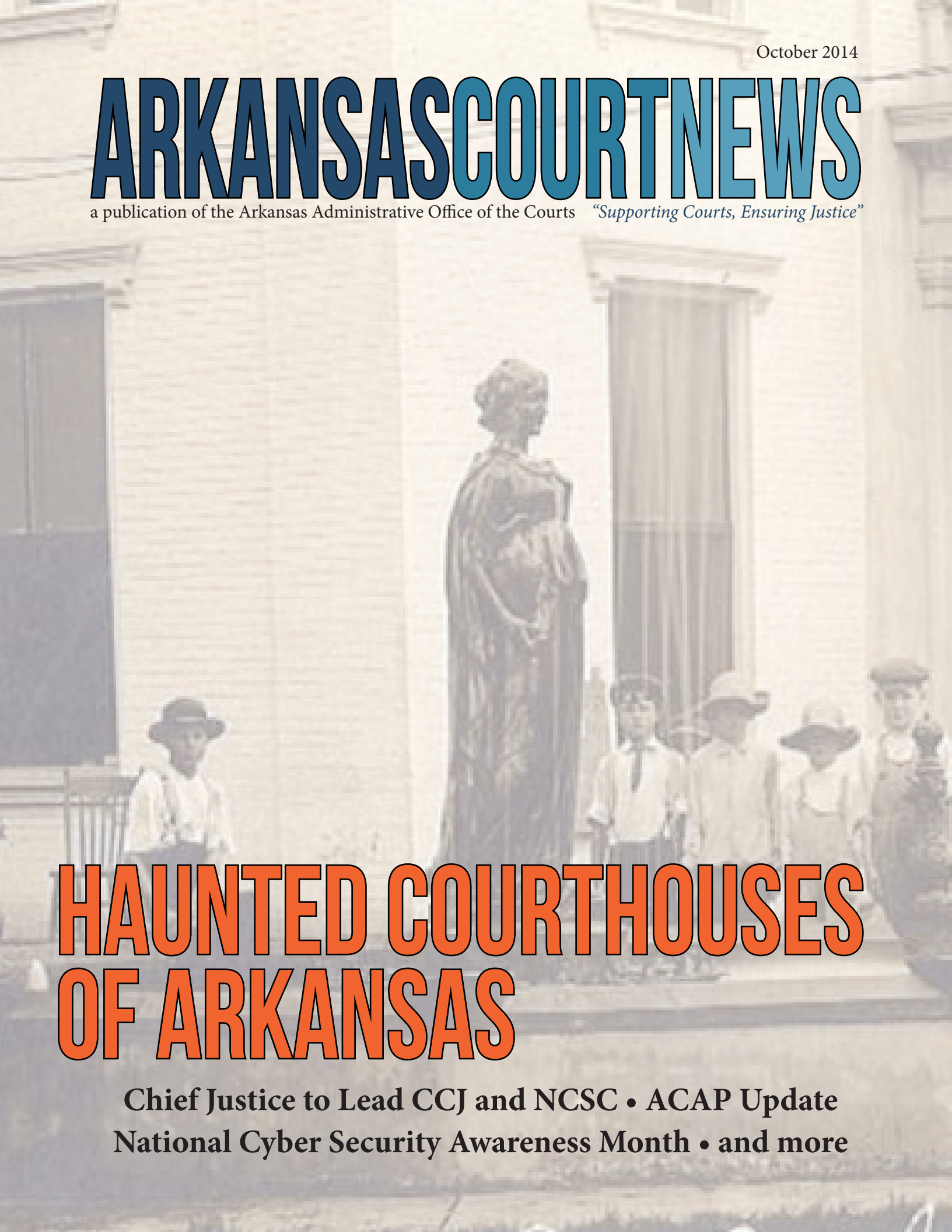


October 2014

ARKANSAS COURT NEWS

a publication of the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts *"Supporting Courts, Ensuring Justice"*



HAUNTED COURTHOUSES OF ARKANSAS

**Chief Justice to Lead CCJ and NCSC • ACAP Update
National Cyber Security Awareness Month • and more**

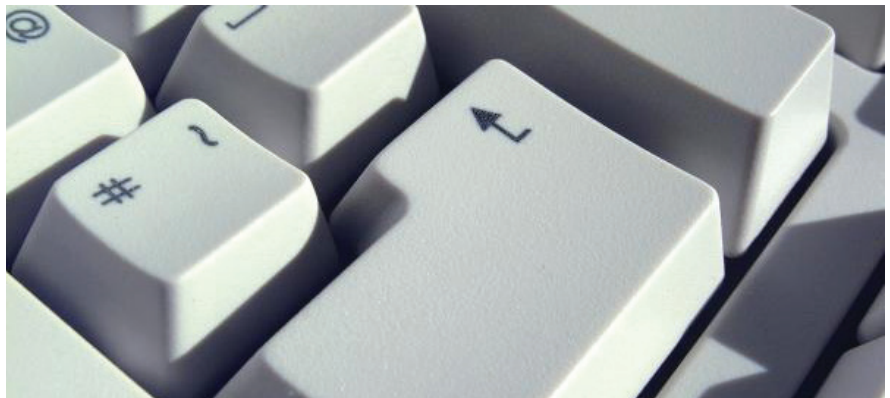
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Little Missouri River
© AR Department of Parks & Tourism

Going Digital



The Administrative Office of the Courts has eliminated the paper version of *Friends of the Court* and gone to an online-only format. This allows room for regular content, more diverse court-related news, and more features on *you*, the people who do the work of the Judicial Branch.

The newsletter has been completely reformatted to utilize the new medium. It has undergone a name change as well, and will now be called *Arkansas Court News*, a title more fitting for its content.

Starting with this issue, an electronic version of the newsletter will be published on the Judiciary website:

www.courts.arkansas.gov/forms-and-publications/newsletters/friends-court

Arkansas Court News is a bi-monthly publication of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Contributions, comments, and inquiries are always welcome.

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THE HAUNTED COURTHOUSES OF ARKANSAS



Witnesses say the female “ghost” in this photo can be heard at night when the Crawford County Courthouse is closed.

Do you ever feel like someone is watching you, but no one is there? Do you hear phantom footsteps? Unexplainable sounds? Do you believe in ghosts? Arkansas is home to many places with reputations for being haunted. Some of those places are our courthouses.

The Cross County Courthouse in Wynne is said to be haunted. D.D. Dixon, a circuit clerk, relayed some of the stories and experiences.

“We just had another experience this morning!” Dixon wrote on July 15. “Our bailiff was opening up the courtroom and there were two streaks of light going up the wall where the judge’s bench is. Keep in mind, there are no windows in our courtroom. The bailiff turned the light on, then back off, and the streaks were gone. Needless to say, he was a little shaken by this experience!”

Dixon said that the courthouse was built in 1969 on the site of the old courthouse, which included the jail. She said they hear lots of noises, and the sounds of books and file cabinets being moved. Three of the clerks have seen a “figure” in the vault. In the County Clerk’s office, the sounds of typing came from an electric typewriter that



Desha County Courthouse
Photo credit: arkansascityusa.com

“During a murder trial in 2012 is when we saw the ‘figure,’” Dixon said. “It was very creepy. The hair on the back of my neck still stands up when we talk about it.”

One of the more notorious haunted locations is the Desha County Courthouse. Former County Judge and current state Rep. Mark McElroy used to dare people to spend the night in the courthouse he managed.

“I spent twenty years at the courthouse,” McElroy said, “and sometimes I’d work on the budget at night and I’d hear someone go walking up the stairs and walking around, but no one would be there. One time I happened to be close by when a door slammed and I could see the glass vibrating.”

In 2009, a paranormal investigation

was unplugged. group called Spirit Seekers spent an evening at the courthouse, along with McElroy, a local reporter, and *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reporter Mike Linn. It’s not mentioned in the news story, but McElroy said that when they were sitting in a courtroom, what looked like sparklers moved down from the ceiling about three feet before shooting across the room, then returning.

“It was like the ghost was putting on a show,” McElroy said. “It was spooky.”

When asked recently about the ghost hunt more than five years ago, Linn said, “I don’t remember seeing sparklers but I do remember being somewhat spooked out there.” He also

remembers Judge McElroy as being “awesome” and “funny.”

Shelle Stormoe is the education coordinator for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. She travels the state to collect and tell stories about our history, including Arkansas City’s haunted courthouse. She tells of construction workers who refused to work in the Desha County

Courthouse after dark because they said their scaffolding would shake with them on it; doors would slam; and it felt like someone was holding onto plywood boards to prevent workers from carrying them into the courthouse.

In Fort Smith, Stormoe tells of an old barracks building that is said to be haunted. In 1872, the federal court was moved from Van Buren to Fort Smith into the building, which was converted to a courtroom and jail. Judge Isaac Parker was known as “The Hanging Judge” at the time. He presided over more than 13,000 cases and sentenced 160 people to death. Seventy-nine of those were actually hanged. These days, people say you can see the ropes on the gallows swinging, even without wind, and that a gavel can be heard banging in the old courtroom, despite the fact that no one is in the room.

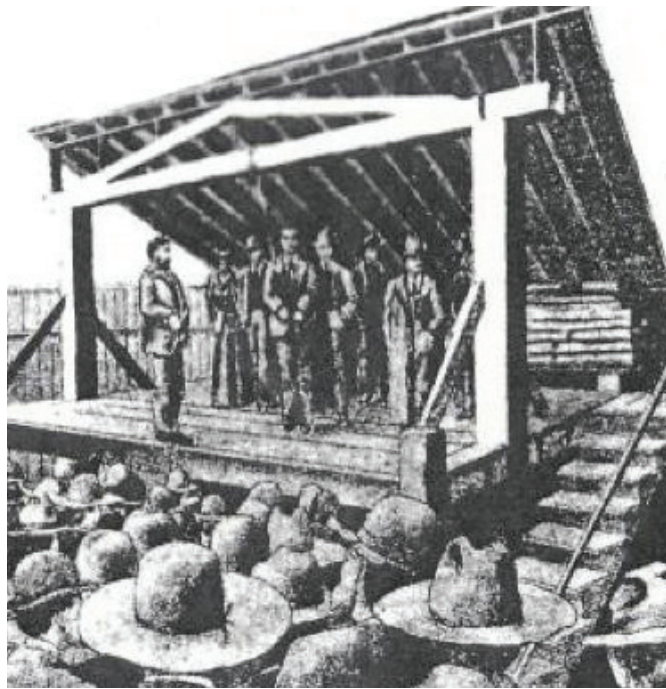


Imagine of a “stereocard showing federal courthouse at Fort Smith. (before 1888)
Photo credit: Fort Smith National Historic Site (FSNHS) website.

A 2009 story in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* tells of Powhatan's alleged ghost who "lives" in the courthouse attic.

"[Andrew] Springer was a victim of a lynch mob in 1887 a week after he allegedly raped a Sharp County woman and was transported to Lawrence County for [trial,]" wrote reporter Jeannie Brosius. "According to reports from paranormal investigators, Springer, and someone who claims to be his sister, are seeking the truth. Records show Springer is Lawrence County's only lynching."

The story goes on, "'They (paranormal investigators) claim he is still hanging around because he wants to be vindicated,' Powhatan Historic State Park program assistant Steve Saunders said. 'He never got his day in court.'"



"Drawing of the execution of Crawford Goldsby, alias Cherokee Bill, March 17, 1896." Image of the gallows from the FSNHS website.

Saunders said he had never seen a ghost and he is a skeptic.

In a later *Democrat-Gazette* article, reporter Kenneth Heard writes, "[W]eird things have happened there. Doors close by themselves, and employees hear weird

noises from the upstairs courtroom."

Ladonna Maxie, an assistant at the park, said in the Jan. 3, 2011 story that her cell phone shuts off in the courtroom, but works everywhere else.

According to Haunted Places (www.hauntedplaces.org), "The 1911 courthouse [in Monroe County] is rumored to be haunted by Ernze Mabel Orr, aka 'Mabel.'" Abused by her husband, Mabel is said to have conspired with slaves to kill him. She was sentenced to hang, but the sheriff is said to have pitied her and gave her a poison, which she used to kill herself the night before she was to be executed. Witnesses have said they can hear her moaning from the courthouse basement, and lights are seen where the hanged slaves' bodies were taken for burial.

There are many more stories out there about haunted locations in Arkansas. Although there have been no claims that the Justice Building is haunted, there was a death in the Supreme Court Library.

Please visit our website to see extra content about some of those and from our court friends around the country.

Do you have any stories you would like to add? Let us know and we'll post those, too!



The restored Powhatan County courthouse
Photo credit: Arkansas State Parks website.

Chief Justice to Lead CCJ and NCSC

Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Jim Hannah has been named President of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and chair of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for the 2014-2015 year.

The Conference of Chief Justices was founded in 1949 to allow the highest judicial officers from the nation to meet and discuss the operation of state judicial systems, rules and methods of procedure, and opportunities to improve the administration of justice. Members of CCJ also serves as a state court representative before Congress.

The National Center of State Courts is a non-profit organization founded in 1971 to provide leadership and service to the state courts through education, training, management, and research.

“NCSC is honored to have Chief Justice Hannah move into a leadership position with the nation’s court community,” said Mary McQueen, NCSC president. “He brings a national reputation for his expertise in numerous areas, including access to justice, child and family law, and technology. Courts across the country will benefit from Chief Justice Hannah’s experience and leadership style.”
In addition to his service



Justice Hannah also serves as co-chair of the CCJ/COSCA courts, children and families committee, and is a member of the government affairs committee.

As Chair of the Board of Directors for the State Justice Institute (SJI), Chief Justice Hannah chose to host their mid-year meeting at the Justice Building in Little Rock. Board members convened in Little Rock for two days and in addition to their meeting at the Justice Building, toured

the Clinton Library and other city landmarks.

SJI is a non-profit organization that provides funding for the improvement of state courts. Currently, SJI is the only source of this funding in the country.

to CCJ and NCSC, Justice Hannah serves on the U.S. Supreme Court Judicial Conference Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction and was nominated to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors for the State Justice Institute by President Barak Obama and confirmed by Congress.



from left to right: Judge Wilfredo Martinez, Florida; Mr. Hernan D. Vera, President & CEO of Public Counsel; Arkansas Chief Justice Jim Hannah; Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe; Ms. Isabel Frammer, Founder and Principal Partner of Language Access Consultants; Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, New York; Jonathan D. Mattiello, Executive Director, State Justice Institute; Mr. Daniel J. Baker, State Court Administrator of the Utah Administrative Office of the Courts.

Court Interpreters Host Interpreting Seminar



Sign language and spoken language interpreters from across the country met in Little Rock in July for the AOC Court Interpreters' "Legal Interpreting Seminar for Interpreters in the Judiciary." The program, open to certified interpreters, focused on the needs of certified language interpreters and the issues they face in the courtroom.

Participants were given instruction on language issues such as colloquialisms and idioms; courtroom protocol and jury instruction; how to handle forensic transcripts and translation; and evidence collection.

Of the seminar held at the William H. Bowen School of Law, participants in their evaluations said, "I truly enjoyed the dynamic conversations about our work in the courts," and "we had such a diverse mixture of topics and interpreters."

Remembering Margie



Margie Wagon, district court clerk in Stephens, Arkansas, passed away on August 19, 2014. Wagon was Stephens's first and only clerk until her retirement in 2012. Prior to her work as a district court clerk, Margie filled various roles in the community including journalist, Sunday School teacher, and Stephens's first female firefighter. She was an artist, musician, hunter, and chef. She loved her family, friends, and community.

We thank her for her service to the Judiciary and to the city of Stephens. She will be greatly missed.



National Cyber Security Awareness Month

by Dain Couch
IT Security Officer

October is the 11th Annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month! While it may not have the clout of Breast Cancer Awareness Month or the fanfare of National Pizza Month, Cyber Security Awareness is essential in this day and age. In the first 10 days of this month:

- JP Morgan Chase revealed contact information for 76 million households and 7 million small businesses was stolen this summer.
- Sears Holding Co. revealed that Kmart customer credit and debit card information has been stolen (no information on scope yet).
- Dairy Queen confirmed the theft of customer credit and debit card information from 395 stores.
- Customer and company data for MBIA Inc., the United States' largest bond insurer, was discovered openly available on the internet, including administrative account information that could be used to gain access to company computers and even more data.

So, in honor of Cyber Security Awareness Month, here is a brief rundown of four of the most important topics for your awareness and action.

Phishing emails attempt to steal your sensitive information and/or infect your computer through the use of internet links, attachments, or forms. Some phishing emails are created to look like legitimate emails from banks, postal services, airlines, etc.

Why is awareness of phishing emails important?

Phishing emails can cause great damage to your systems and data if you open attachments or visit websites. These simple actions can install malware on your computer that can result in stealing account information and/or encrypting your files so that you cannot access them, among other hazards. Responding or filling out web forms may compromise your accounts directly.

What can I do?

Never click on links and attachments from suspicious emails. There simply are no banks that will ask you to confirm sensitive account data through email; nor are there any Nigerian princes who want to give you money.

Passwords are the most common means of authenticating a person's identity online.

Why are passwords important?

When used properly, passwords are a critical component of securing information. Strong passwords help prevent unauthorized access to data.

What can I do?

Use long, unique, complex passwords for each account. Of course, this is easier said than done, but the December issue of Friends of the Court will discuss and offer more in-depth password tips and solutions.

Software updates (or patches) are continuously issued by manufacturers such as Microsoft, Adobe, and Oracle. Updates correct operational and security flaws in software.

Why are software updates important?

Software updates block cybercriminals from exploiting programming flaws to gain access to data and systems.

What can I do?

Install software patches regularly. Many programs have an option to automatically check for updates. Use this option when available.

Antivirus software blocks known versions of viruses from infecting your computer.

Why is antivirus software important?

Cybercriminals will use the cheapest, easiest methods to breach your computer's defenses. If a known virus that is 3 years old is still effective, they will use it. Properly updated antivirus prevents your computer from being infected by known viruses.

What can I do?

Install antivirus software and keep it up to date.

around the Justice Building...



Chief Justice Hannah leads the swearing in of new Attorney General's staff members.



Attorney General Dustin McDaniel with newly-sworn in staff members.

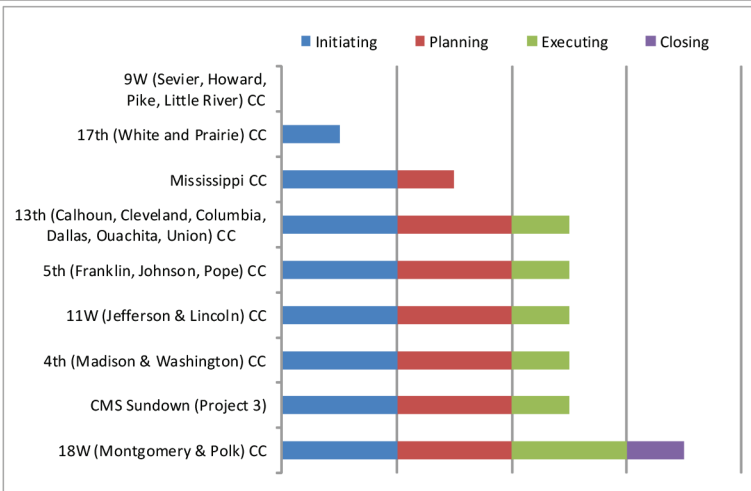
ACAP project update

(arkansas court automation projects)

CIS Division Projects Progress at a Glance Week of October 21, 2014



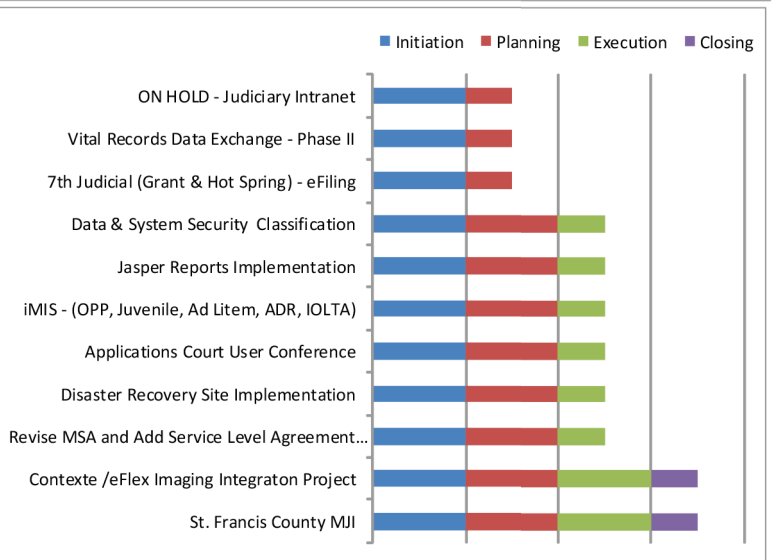
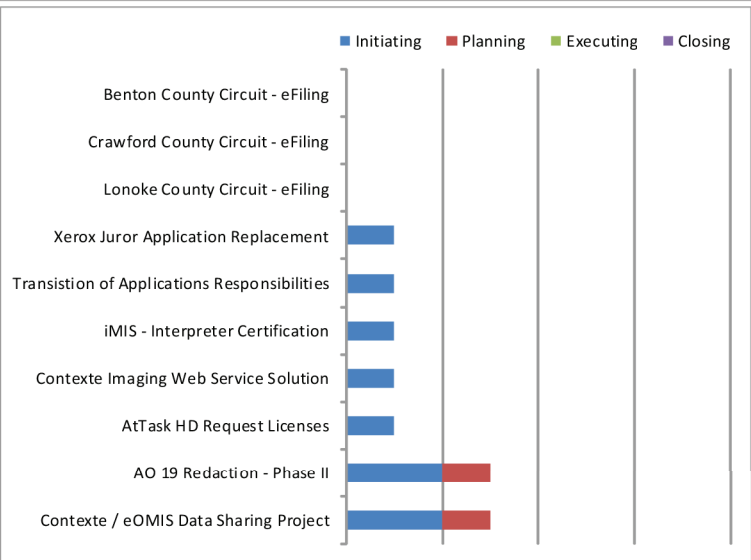
Contexte Implementation - Circuit Courts



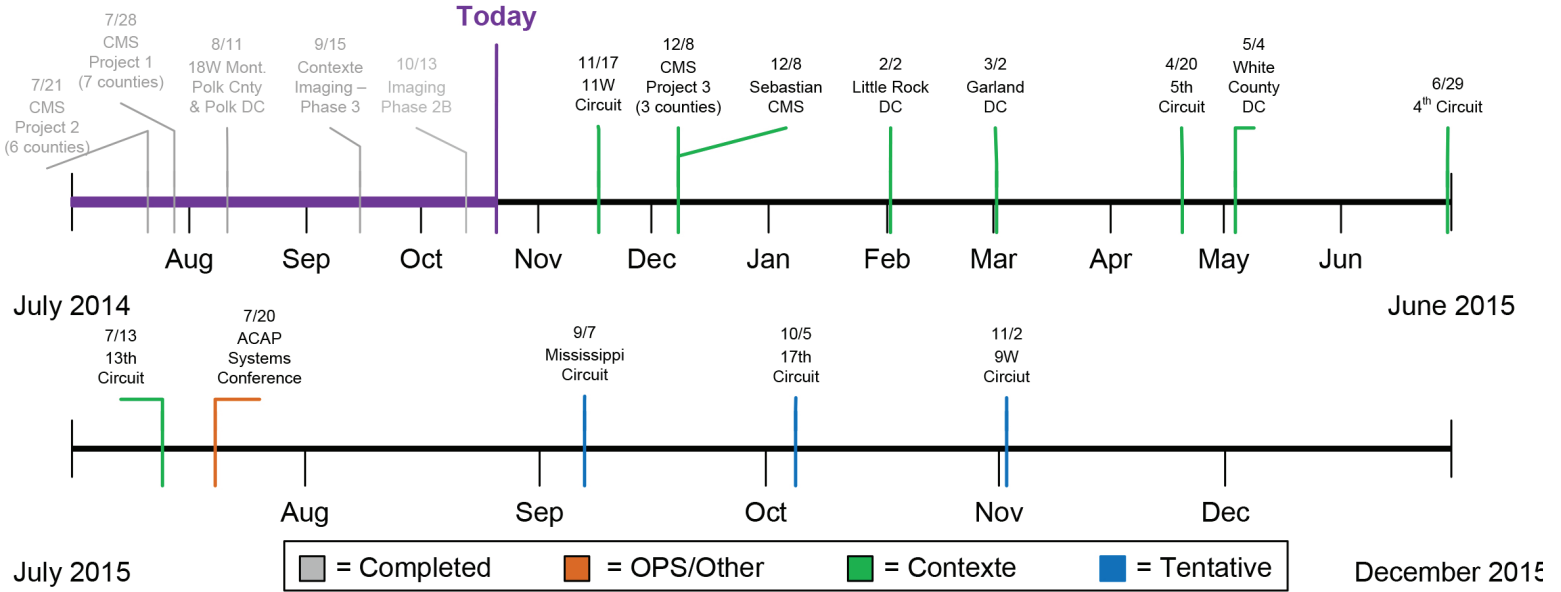
Contexte Implementation - District Courts



Other ACAP Projects



Go Live Dates 2014 - 2015



For more information regarding the Arkansas Court Automation Programs, please visit www.courts.arkansas.gov/administration/acap or contact Tim Holthoff, Court Information Systems Director, at tim.holthoff@arkansas.gov.

Arkansas Court Automation Programs

ELECTRONIC FILING

CASE MANAGEMENT

JURY MANAGEMENT

ONLINE PAYMENTS

ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS

ELECTRONIC CITATIONS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL DATA EXCHANGES

make plans to attend the first annual

ACAP SYSTEMS CONFERENCE

This conference, hosted by the Administrative Office of the Courts, will be held October 31, 2014, at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Little Rock. This will be an opportunity for court employees to learn more about the Arkansas Court Automation Project and its applications, including Contexte, CourtConnect, eFlex, Juror, and MyJuryInfo.

The conference begins with registration at 8:30 am and will include sessions on securing court information, accessing court records, new features in court management software, and improving customer support. There will also be a software lab where participants can receive hands-on instruction and application tutorials and demos.

For more information and to register for the conference, please visit www.courts.arkansas.gov/acapsConference.

Arkansas Supreme Court
 Administrative Office of the Courts
acap.help@arkansas.gov
www.courts.arkansas.gov/acap
"Supporting Courts, Ensuring Justice"

children in the courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts' Juvenile Division held its annual Children in the Courts conference at the Doubletree Hotel in Little Rock. More than 200 dependency-neglect attorneys, DHS agency attorneys, domestic-relations attorneys ad litem, and circuit judges attended the three-day conference.

Session topics included the importance of quality parent-child visitation; education outcomes for foster youth; recognizing and documenting the signs of abuse and neglect-caused fractures in children; the effects of trauma on adolescent brains; issues for immigrant children; and emerging issues in joint custody hearings.

Donna Gay, Administrative Office of the Courts staff attorney said, "The domestic-relations attorney ad litem sessions I observed were excellent and seemed very well received... The quality of the sessions this year, along with the variety of subject matter, was the best we have ever had."

The Juvenile Division also held their annual Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) conference in Little Rock. CASA supports local programs providing qualified volunteers to help abused and neglected children in juvenile-neglect proceedings. A CASA volunteer acts in the child's best interest and speaks up for abused and neglected children in the courtroom and other settings. The information they provide allows a judge to make informed decisions about the placement of these children. Currently, there are 25 CASA programs statewide.

CASA directors and volunteer advocates from around the state attended the two-day conference held at the Doubletree Hotel. Sessions focused on program development and included topics such as grant writing; what

judges want from CASA volunteers; dynamics of domestic violence; and building resource development plans.

For more information on the Children in the Courts conference and other juvenile division programs, please contact Connie Hickman Tanner, Juvenile Division Director, at connie.tanner@arkansas.gov. For more information on CASA or how to become a child advocate, please contact Mary Beth Luibel, State CASA Coordinator, at casa@arkansas.gov.



Nickie Galloway, Social Work Project Coordinator, presented Promoting Meaningful Connections: The Importance of Quality Parent-Child Visitation.



Pulaski County Circuit Judge Joye Warren speaks at the CASA luncheon.

CASA conference

New Faces

Supreme Court

Christy Lute - Deputy Clerk
Kyle Burton - Appellate Review Attorney
Michelle Daniel - Administrative Assistant
Heather Goodson Zachary - Law Clerk

Court Reporters

23rd Circuit (Huckabee) - **Donna Wood**
23rd Circuit (Feland) - **Robin Hudson**

District Court Clerks

Howard County - **Laurie Westfall**
Phillips County - **Jessica Butler**
Woodruff County - **Karen Harrison**

Court of Appeals

Charles Cunningham - Admin. Assistant

AOC

Sarah Smith - ADR Training Coordinator
Katie Pettito - Regional Functional Specialist
Kasi Hill Erwin - Attorney Ad Litem

Trial Court Administrators

12th Circuit - **Raquel Smith**

County Clerks

Lee County - **Ann Hancock**

in the Judiciary



Are you a new court employee or know someone who should be featured in this section? We want to know!

Contact Meghan Sever at meghan.sever@gmail.com.

calendar of events

October

Arkansas Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program 2014 Advocates Dinner (Little Rock) **30**

ACAP Systems Conference (Little Rock) **31**

November

New Circuit Judge Orientation (Little Rock) **7**

Juvenile Division Judges Meeting (Heber Springs) **12-14**

ADR Commission Meeting (Morrilton) **13**

Court Interpreter Skill Building Workshop (Little Rock) **15**

District Court Clerks Certification (1st & 3rd Districts) (Springdale) **21**

December

Juvenile Court Overview for Mediators **10-12**

February

District Clerks Certification (2nd & 3rd Districts) (Little Rock) **13**

District Court Officers (Hot Springs) **26-27**

Have a conference or program you would like to have added to the calendar? Email it to meghan.sever@arkansas.gov.