



# Friends of the Court

Published by the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts

Volume 9, Number 4  
January, 2002

## **On the Road from Vision to Reality - Automating Arkansas Courts - by Tim Holthoff, ACAP Director**

The primary goal of the Arkansas Court Automation Project (ACAP) is to establish a statewide case management system in the courts of limited and general jurisdiction in Arkansas. Working with the Supreme Court Committee on Automation and the Administrative Office of the Courts, the project has taken a big step towards realizing the vision.

On January 18, 2002, ACAP released a Request for Proposals from qualified firms to provide a commercial off-the-shelf case management system (CMS) for statewide implementation in the limited and general jurisdiction courts of Arkansas. The system must have the proven capability of handling all types of cases including traffic, small claims, criminal, civil, probate, juvenile, and domestic relations. Vendor responses must be submitted by March 1, 2002, and will be evaluated by members of the Automation Committee. By the middle of April we hope to have a contract with a vendor to begin the process of statewide automation of case management. After case management issues are settled, we will begin looking at electronic filing, document imaging and management, and other court technology issues.

The process of developing the RFP began by looking at RFP's for other statewide case management systems. Then, over several weeks, Tim Holthoff, Director of ACAP, and other AOC staff members, including Keith Caviness, met with judges, clerks, case coordinators, and other state agencies,

in order to develop system requirements for inclusion in the RFP.

At the state level, the draft RFP was reviewed by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, the Arkansas Crime Information Center, the Arkansas Chief Information Officer, the Office of State Purchasing, the Integrated Justice Information Systems Coordinating Council, and many others.

At the local level, the draft RFP was reviewed by district judges, district clerks, circuit judges, circuit clerks, and case coordinators. Meetings with the various groups resulted in significant modifications to the RFP. Finally, in December, the Automation Committee approved the release of the RFP. After finalizing a contract between the AOC and the Highway Department to receive funding for the project, the RFP was released on January 18. Twenty vendors submitted letters indicating that they intend to submit proposals for the statewide case management system. In March, the top four vendors will be conducting demonstrations at the Justice Building.

In addition to selecting a vendor, ACAP and the Committee are also working on the selection of pilot courts for the project. In December, J.D. Gingerich, AOC Director, sent a letter to all courts inviting their participation as pilot courts. Thirteen district courts and thirteen circuit courts expressed interest in serving as pilot courts. ACAP recently sent surveys to the potential pilot courts to determine their

current levels of automation, technology, staffing and funding. The Committee is interested in selecting a variety of pilot courts based on size, caseload, level of automation, and their ability to help other courts when the pilot project is completed.

With information gathered from potential pilot courts, the Committee, ACAP, the AOC, and the winning vendor will select pilot locations for the new statewide system. Although pilot courts will likely receive more state funding for implementation in their courts, they will also have the burden of working through the inevitable problems associated with a technology project.

The progress made thus far suggests that by the middle of summer we will begin implementing the new system in the pilot courts. When the pilot projects are completed, hopefully by the end of the year, the statewide rollout of the new system will begin as funding permits.

For more information on the Arkansas Court Automation Project, please visit our website at <http://acap.state.ar.us>. You may send questions, comments, and suggestions to Tim Holthoff, Director, Arkansas Court Automation Project, 303 Aegon Building, 501 Woodlane Drive, Little Rock, AR 72201. You may contact us by phone at (501)683-4030, by fax at (501)683-4036, or by e-mail at [tim.holthoff@mail.state.ar.us](mailto:tim.holthoff@mail.state.ar.us).

## Judicial Resources Assessment Committee's Time Study for 2002

At last fall's Judicial Council, the Judicial Resources Assessment Committee (JRAC) adopted a "time study" approach to measuring the need for new judgeships. The time study methodology replaces the Delphi system that estimated judicial time based on collective opinion of how long case-related activities took.

The time study methodology revolves around the collection of daily time sheets. Each judge who participates will report all time spent on activities that are case-related or non-case-related such as judicial education, circuit travel, and community-based involvement. The daily data will then be compiled to estimate judgeship needs throughout the state.

Thirty-seven judges from a variety of circuits have volunteered to participate in the time study. Each judge will submit two randomly selected months of data.

JRAC's tentative time line for the time study and for the process of proposing new judgeship legislation for the next session are as follows:

January 15: Date that letters will be sent out to state legislators, judges, and local bar associations requesting proposals for new judgeships

May 30: Date for turning in proposals for new judgeships

Copies of proposals will be circulated at the June Judicial Council meeting to allow adequate time for consideration for fall meetings.

June 12-14: Judicial Council in Hot Springs/JRAC meeting time & place to be announced

June 30: End of JRAC Time Study Statistics from the Time Study will be tabulated during July 2002.

August 23: JRAC meeting/ Justice Building's Education Room 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Meeting to discuss Time Study results and hear proposals for new judgeships.

October 16-18: Judicial Council in Eureka Springs/JRAC meeting time & place to be announced

November 1: Date set by Act 864 as the deadline for finalizing criteria for establishing new judgeships

Any proposals for new judgeships should be addressed to Judge John Fogleman, JRAC Chair, c/o the Administrative Office of the Courts, 625 Marshall Street, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72201.

## Military Assistance Legal Task Force Formed

As a result of events since September 11, and in view of the legal assistance needs of deploying Arkansas military personnel and their families, the Arkansas Bar Association has formed a Military Assistance Task Force, and seeks volunteers from among Arkansas lawyers. Chaired by Little Rock attorney Glenn Jones, a retired Army Reserve officer, the Task Force will also seek to educate the public, bench and bar on the two primary Federal laws involved - the "Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act" (SSCRA) [50 U.S.C. App. §501 et seq.] and the "Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Act" (USERRA) [38 U.S.C. §§4301-33]. Additional information about military law-related topics can be found on the Arkansas Bar Association website ([www.arkbar.com](http://www.arkbar.com)) at the link to "Legal Assistance for Military Personnel," the American Bar Association website ([www.abanet.org/legalservices/helpreservists](http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/helpreservists)), the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) website ([www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org)), and the Reserve Officers Association website ([www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org)). With over 600 Arkansas reservists and National Guard members now deployed overseas, and several hundred more called to duty stateside, volunteer Arkansas attorneys can make a difference for the service members and their families. Attorneys interested in volunteer work in this effort should contact: Glenn Jones, Chair, Arkansas Bar Association Military Assistance Task Force, 400 West Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201.



Kellye Mashburn, Research Analyst for the AOC(right) conducted a training session for judges participating in the study. (l.to r.) Judges Kim Smith, Robert Vittitow, David Goodson, and (partially shown) Joyce Warren listen to discussion about the time study.



## Legal Representation Programs Involving Children

The AOC administers three legal representation programs in cases involving children. Requirements for all three programs are set out in the Supreme Court's Administrative Order Number 15, published by *per curiam* on September 21, 2001.

(1) *Attorneys Ad Litem in Juvenile Courts* either are employed by or contract with the AOC to represent the best interests of children in dependency-neglect cases. In 1999, the General Assembly began allocating State funding for appointing attorneys for children who are the subjects of dependency-neglect cases, a right to which they are entitled statutorily. The AOC now employs 17 full-time attorneys and contracts with 72 part-time attorneys to ensure that every area of the state has these services. Contracts are by geographic area and are reviewed for renewal each biennium.

To become eligible, lawyers must complete a subject-specific, 10-hour course of study, plus a practicum component, as set out in Administrative Order Number 15. They maintain compliance by completing 4 hours of CLE annually in subject areas prescribed by the Court in the Administrative Order. In the 2001 Session, the General Assembly appropriated \$5,710,000 for the biennium for this program. To date, 91 attorneys have become qualified as juvenile division attorneys ad litem.

(2) *Attorneys Ad Litem in Domestic Relations and Probate Divisions of Circuit Court*, formerly called "chancery" attorneys ad litem, represent the best interests

of children in disputed custody cases. These arise from divorce or paternity cases in the domestic relations division and from guardianship cases in the probate division. Courts appoint them on a case-by-case basis from a list of those qualified. Qualification results from an attorney's completing 10 hours of subject-specific training as set out by Administrative Order Number 15. They maintain their qualification by obtaining 4 hours of CLE each year in subject areas set out by the Administrative Order.

Course work for attorneys ad litem in juvenile division court and in domestic relations/probate divisions of court differs, with the former covering statutory and case law specific to juvenile division courts, and the latter covering training pertinent to custody cases in non-juvenile divisions. Some topics overlap and provide credit for both programs.

First funded in January of 2000 with an appropriation of \$50,000 for six months, funding for attorneys ad litem in domestic relations and probate divisions is \$200,000 for this biennium. To date, 134 people have become qualified.

(3) *Counsel for parents* is the newest of the three programs. Beginning August 13, 2001, Juvenile Division judges have been able to appoint qualified attorneys at the State's expense on a case-by-case basis to represent indigent parents who are defendants in dependency-neglect cases. As with attorneys ad litem, parents' attorneys become qualified by completing a subject-

specific, 10-hour course of study, plus a practicum, as set out by the Supreme Court in Administrative Order Number 15. They maintain their qualification by obtaining 4 hours of CLE annually in prescribed subject areas. The educational requirements are the same for parents' counsel as for attorneys ad litem in juvenile division courts. The program was funded for \$2,720,000 for this biennium. Since its inception, 97 attorneys have become qualified.

Although each of these programs is distinctly different from the others, they share a common thread. In all three, legal services are provided for children or parents who have been unrepresented or under-represented in our courts. The intent and the hope is that these programs fill a need that will result in an improved quality of representation in cases involving children, in a speedier resolution of the cases, and in the provision of better information to assist judges in making good decisions, based upon the best interests of the children who are the subject of the litigation.

Administrative Order 15 is available on the Arkansas Judiciary website (<http://courts.state.ar.us>). Other information relating to attorneys ad litem and parent counsel, such as the names of those qualified, guidelines for payment, and pertinent forms, will be available soon on the website, as well.



## New Faces in the Judiciary

### District Court Clerks

East Camden - **Ann Nordmeyer** replaces Deanna Landreth.  
 Trumann - **Marilyn Pineda** replaces Shannon Vickers.  
 Harrison - **Lisa Horton** replaces Judy Harris.

### Case Coordinators

6th (Kilgore) **Melissa King** replaces Bobbi Vinson.  
 11th W (Davis) **Ruth Calloway** replaces Sandra Starnes.

### City Judges

Grady - **Howard Holthoff** replaces Victor Harper.

### City Court Clerks

Bald Knob - **Johnna Brown** replaces Joyce Dunn.  
 Widener - **Holly Sanders** replaces Liz Lopez.  
 Grady - **Sandra Armstrong** replaces Ruth Calloway.



FYI - The new phone area code for the State of Arkansas has been put into place. The new number, (479), is replacing SOME of the (501) area codes. The (501) numbers that are changing to (479) include the following counties: Benton, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison, Polk, Pope, Scott, Sebastian, Washington, and Yell.

All (870) area codes will remain the same. For the (501) codes that are changing, dialing either the (501) code or (479) code will work until July, 2002. Then the (479) only will permanently go into effect.

## CALENDAR

### **FEBRUARY**

District Court Officers **21-22**  
 (Hot Springs - Arlington Hotel)

Case Coordinators' Conference **28-1**  
 (Hot Springs - Arlington Hotel)

Circuit Judges' Changing Hats - **7-8**  
 Domestic Relations (Little Rock - Holiday Inn Select)

### **MARCH**

District/City Court Clerks **15**  
 Certification (Little Rock - Holiday Inn Select)

### **APRIL**

Circuit Judges' Changing Hats - **11-12**  
 Probate (Little Rock - Holiday Inn Select)

### **MAY**

Circuit Judges' Changing Hats - **9-10**  
 Juvenile (Little Rock - Holiday Inn Select)

District Court Judges' Spring College **16-18**  
 (Hot Springs - Arlington Hotel)

District/City Court Clerks Certification **16-18**  
 (Hot Springs - Arlington Hotel)

Children and the Law **22-24**  
 (Fayetteville - Radisson Hotel)

### **JUNE**

Spring Judicial College/Council Mtg. **12-14**  
 (Hot Springs - Majestic Hotel)

Official Court Reporters **14-15**  
 (Hot Springs - Majestic Hotel)



### **Friends of the Court**

Administrative Office of the Courts  
 Justice Building/625 Marshall  
 Little Rock, AR 72201



**Friends of the Court** is a bi-monthly publication by the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts. Contributions, comments, and inquiries are welcome. Please submit to **Friends of the Court**, A.O.C., Justice Building, 625 Marshall, Little Rock, AR 72201. Tel. (501) 682-9400. Karolyn Bond, Editor.

**Address  
 Correction  
 Requested**