

22ND JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT OF
MCHENRY
COUNTY

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22nd Judicial Circuit Bench Press



August, 2016

22nd Judicial Circuit Takes the Next Technological Step – Electronic Signatures

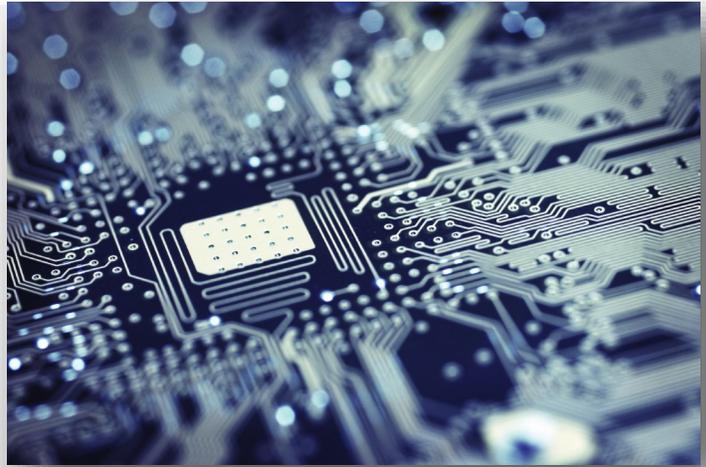
On August 1, 2016, the 22nd Judicial Circuit, Circuit Clerk of the Court and other judicial partners will take the next evolutionary step in technology and begin allowing the use of electronic signatures.

Local Court Rule 21 was recently amended and ratified by the Circuit Judges authorizing the use of electronic signatures. The impact will be profound.

The 22nd Judicial Circuit is one of a few judicial circuits which has been approved for e-Record by the Illinois Supreme Court. This designation allows the 22nd Judicial Circuit to rely on the electronic record as the official record of the court, rather than relying upon paper files.

The use of electronic signatures will allow court users and judicial officers the ability to create electronic documents and then sign the documents electronically, without the need to print the document for signature.

While the authorization of electronic signatures is a rather easy process to complete, the implementation pro-



cess will be complex.

There are many processes in place in our courts and each one will need to be examined and evaluated to determine how best to utilize electronic signatures and move documents electronically. Presently, the court does have the ability within the judges' aiSmartBench application to sign documents and move them electronically within the system, as well as emailing documents. Additionally, Kathy Keefe, the Circuit Clerk of the Court, is working with her cases management vendor to further the use of electronic signatures within her environment.

Presently documents created in

aiSmartBench cannot be returned to the Clerk's case management system, so documents will still be printed and scanned. However, there will be an initiative to begin evaluating that process as soon as practical.

Additionally, the Court in conjunction with the Circuit Clerk and the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office will begin to evaluate the implementation of electronic search warrants which will allow officers to submit warrants to judges electronically for review. Once reviewed the judge will sign the warrant electronically.

This initiative will create greater system wide efficiencies and reduce costs.

Judge Michael Chmiel Elected to Judge's Association Board



Circuit Judge Michael Chmiel was elected to the Board of Directors of the Illinois Judges Association at the annual meeting held on June 3, 2016 at Chicago-Kent College of Law. Judge Chmiel will serve a three year term. There are approximately 50 members of the Board of Directors.

The Illinois Judges Association is composed of 1,250 active and retired Illinois State Court Judges. The IJA provides education and ser-

vices to its members and information about court operations to the public.

Judge Chmiel has been a circuit judge for eleven years and is a member of various bar associations, including the McHenry County and Illinois State Bar Associations. Judge Chmiel participates in various community-based organizations and coaches girls fast pitch softball.

The Illinois Judges Association also in-

stalled new officers for 2016-17 at the annual meeting. They are: President, Israel A. Desierto, Cook County; Vice-President, Judge (Ret.) John P. Coady, Taylorville, IL; 2nd Vice-President, Judge James E. Snyder, Cook County; 3rd Vice President, Judge Margaret J. Mullen, Lake County; Secretary, Judge Diane M. Shelley, Cook County and Treasurer, Judge Barbara Crowder, Madison County. For more information about the Illinois Judges Association, see www.ija.org

Court Services Employee Jodi Croner says So Long but not Goodbye

It is with regret that Jodi Croner will be leaving the Department of Probation and Court Services to further her career with the McHenry County Sheriff's Office.

Jodi began her career in Court Services in December of 2008 as the Community Service Work Coordinator and was responsible for managing well over 900 cases and 300 work sites. In a little over a year she worked with her supervisor and management to bring order to the chaos that was the public ser-

vice work program.

In 2012 when the McHenry County Drug Court was implemented, Jodi requested to be transferred and became joined with the drug court team. She has been an integral part of the success of the drug court program and in the process helped numerous individuals on the path of recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

Thankfully, Jodi will not be going far. Soon she will begin her new challenge with the McHenry County Sheriff as

their CALEA manager. There is no doubt that our loss in Court Services will be a gain for MCSO.

Jodi: on behalf of the entire 22nd Judicial Circuit, we thank you for your hard work and dedication. It has been a truly wonderful experience having you as one of our team members and we wish you continued success in everything that you do.

Good Luck

Meet the New Faces in Court Services—Megan Yott and Patricia Justis

Megan Yott is our new adult probation officer who will be supervising low risk & administrative cases (LRAC). She recently obtained her Master's degree in Criminal Justice & Criminology from Loyola University Chicago and received her undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Wisconsin - Parkside. While in undergrad, Megan spent two years volunteering and interning at the adult probation office in Lake County and it was during this experience that she realized she wanted to become a probation officer.

Megan was a com-

petitive gymnast for over 10 years but had to leave the sport due to suffering numerous severe knee injuries that resulted in three surgeries. She then transitioned into cheerleading and was on her high school's varsity squad and was a member of a national squad. The national squad she was on became two-time national champions and their winning routines were shown on ESPN. During her free time, Megan enjoys watching football and hockey and is a huge Chicago Blackhawks fan. She lived in Chicago for six years before moving to Woodstock to start her



Megan Yott

career here in McHenry County.

She is thrilled to be a part of McHenry County's innovative and progressive work and is excited to see what the future holds.



Patricia Justis

Patricia (Trish) Justis began working with the Probation and Court Services Department as a Juvenile Probation

Officer in March 2016. She facilitates cognitive-behavioral groups including *Thinking for a Change* and *Moral Reconation Therapy* groups for juveniles, as well as completing social history investigations for the court.

Trish is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and she graduated with her Master's in Social Work from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Trish has previously worked with juveniles on probation in the Day Reporting Center program through Pioneer Center.

Trish also has experience in providing individual

therapy to adolescents at Pioneer where she also supervised other therapists and interns for the last four years.



Deputy John Sosnowski Jr. Receives Award from Drug Court



John Sosnowski Sr.

John Sosnowski Jr.

Recently, McHenry County Sheriff's Deputy John Sosnowski, Jr. received the "Commitment to Excellence Award" from the McHenry County Drug Court. Deputy Sosnowski has been credited with saving the life of one of the participants, having gone above and beyond on numerous occasions to assist drug court participants and treating the participants with dignity and respect.

When available Deputy Sosnowski participates in the weekly Drug Court Team staffings in order to share value information.

Very nicely done and on behalf of the 22nd Judicial Circuit; thank you.



Jury Commission Continues to Seek Current Magazines

Every Monday, 160 jurors are summoned for jury duty. The Jury Commission tries to supply magazines for the jurors while they are waiting. The court does not subscribe to any magazines, newspapers, or periodicals, but tries to secure them through other means. Many of the magazines are outdated.

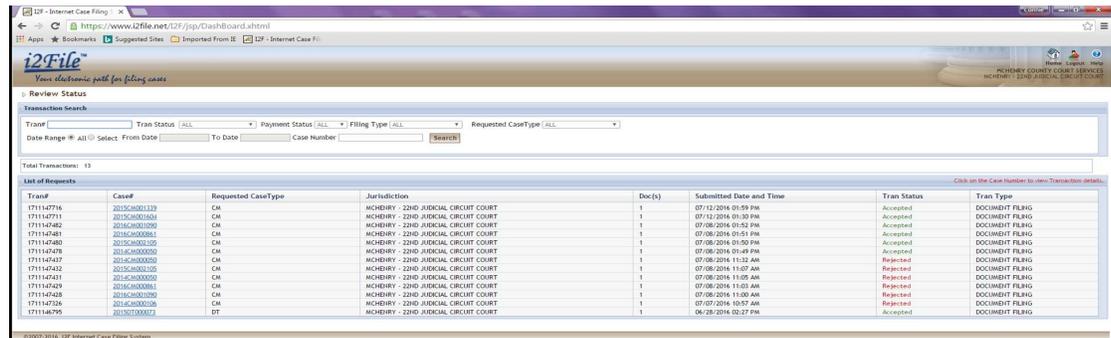
If you have a stack of magazines that you would like to donate to the Jury Commission, it would be very much appreciated. When you're done reading your favorite monthly magazine, please think about dropping it off at the Jury Commission.



I WANT YOUR



Court Services Embraces E-Filing with the Circuit Clerk of the Court



In another endeavor to increase efficiencies between Court Service and the Circuit Clerk of the Court, Mary Polnow and Connie Olson in Court Services have begun electronically filing documents directly with the Circuit Clerk.

Even though both offices are in the McHenry County

Courthouse, by E filing the documents, time is saved and duplication of that entry is reduced. Additionally, because the documents are up loaded into the E-filing portal, images of submitted documents are automatically stored in the Onbase document image system.

Ms. Polnow and Ms.

Olson are responsible for filing hundreds of documents each year with the Circuit Clerk regarding individual's compliance with sentencing orders.

Ms. Olsen indicated, "that it (E filing) works just fine and it is easy to do."

Juvenile Division of Probation and Court Services adds New Programming —Patricia Justis, COG Group Facilitator

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED

Thinking for a Change (T4C) and Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) are two groups that are now being implemented with the juvenile population.

Thinking for a Change is an integrated behavior change program that consists of twenty-five lessons covering social skills, cognitive self-change, and problem solving. T4C focuses on cognitive restructuring which aims at addressing juveniles' thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Modeling behaviors is a key component in the T4C program

and juveniles are required to role play the skills that they learn, then practice the skills in their everyday lives. Homework is also an essential part of the T4C program, in which juveniles report how it went practicing the skills they learned. The first session of T4C began in May 2016 and will run through August 2016.

In fall 2016, the Moral Reconation Therapy group will begin for juveniles. Moral Reconation Therapy is also a cognitive behavioral treatment strategy that focuses on a step-by-step approach. All juveniles partici-

pating in the MRT group will receive a workbook to complete as they work through the program. MRT consists of twelve steps in which juveniles will present to the rest of the group, as well as complete homework and readings. A majority of the steps are passed by the juveniles' peers in the group, and some of the steps are approved by the facilitator.

Both Moral Reconation Therapy and Thinking for a Change take place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the NISRA office in Crystal Lake.

Probation and Court Services Forges Ahead with EPICS— II

—James Edwards, Chief Managing Officer Juvenile Division



James Edwards

Research demonstrates that the “soft skills” that probation officers implement while working with both adult and juvenile probationers are the skills that have the biggest impact in recidivism reduction over the long haul. While other methods of impacting compliance have their place, the skills that probation officers use, cognitive-behavioral intervention skills, have proven highly effective in reaching our system wide goal of sidetracking offenders from the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

In a meta-analysis, Andrews and Dowden (2006) reviewed a wide range of studies of offenders from both community-based and residential settings, and found that *relationship skills*

have a highly significant impact in reducing recidivism. Training to implement a probation officer’s “soft skills,” EPICS-II, *Effective Practices in Correctional Settings*, one-on-one intervention skills sessions with probationers, has been moving at a breakneck speed in the Probation Department since the summer of 2015.

The first group of probation officers and managers completed EPICS-II training in April of 2016. This included months of intensive training, a booster training session, audiotape reviews, and feedback sessions. In addition, our first training group that attended *coaches’ training* is enabling those officers to provide training support for their colleagues. The coaches will be instru-

mental as our second and final wave of officers movesthrough an identical training strategy that began in June 2016. We have now matched coaches with mentees that will work together with our training partners from Core Correctional Solutions. Moving forward, our officers participating in training now will also complete a coaches’ training module and a training of trainers for EPICS-II is planned for a select group in 2017. Ultimately, EPICS-II and other evidence-based practices in the Probation Department will be supported through *communities of practice* (CoP’s). For additional information on CoP’s, see upcoming issues of the *Bench Press*.

EPICS-II
Effective Practices In Correctional Settings-II

Office of Special Project Update—Jason Sterwerf

The Twenty Second Judicial Circuit Office of Special Projects falls within the Department of Court Administration and has 5 full time employees whose primary task is the programmatic administration and care coordination of defendants involved in the Adult Drug Court and Mental Health Court programs. The Court Administration staff includes a Director, Nurse, Case Manager and 2 Clinicians. Specialty Courts such as Drug and Mental Health Courts are integral pieces of the criminal justice system as research confirms that 60-80% of individuals incarcerated in local jails and prisons meet criteria for substance abuse/dependence and there are more persons with mental illness in jails and prisons than in hospitals. Recognizing the need to break the cycle of untreated behavioral health disorders and crime, Adult Drug Courts now number 2,500 worldwide and Mental Health Courts now number over 300 throughout the nation. In Illinois alone there are currently 61 Drug Courts, 23 Mental Health Courts and 13 Veterans Courts. The Twenty Second Judicial Circuit's Mental Health Court was convened in April of 2007 and the Adult Drug Court accepted its first participant on December 1, 2011. Combined the programs have 134 graduates who have less than a 14% criminal recidivism rate. The scientific community has put Specialty Courts under its microscope and

concluded that they significantly increase recovery and reduce crime while doing it cheaper than any other justice strategy.

The Specialty Courts are continuing to reduce recidivism rates within the county, reduce client law enforcement contacts, and provide access to psychiatric and therapeutic care. We also will continue to improve participants' ability to independently manage psychiatric, therapeutic, and medical care, while improving family, social, and community relationships, which leads to reduction in Emergency Department Visits, and over utilizing the social service provider network.

The Adult Drug Court and Mental Health Court programs continue to seek opportunities and collaborative partnerships. The Adult Drug Court has begun using an Evidence Based Assessment tool which provides improved clinical information. The use of the new GAINS assessment provides more information about our clients and offers more insight into making more informed decisions about program acceptance and treatment. The Adult Drug Court has launched the Teleservices court project including Gateway Foundation and National Drug Court Institute. The Adult Drug Court will be submitting the application to the Administrative Office of Illinois



Courts, for the first State Certification for Drug Courts. The Mental Health Court program will begin working on a new partnership with Bravehearts Therapeutic Riding Stable to develop an equine therapy program for the participants. The Specialty Courts Alumni Recovery Program (S.C.A.R.P.) will host the first Alumni family picnic event on Saturday July 30, 2016. In addition, the Alumni program also holds Alumni afternoon bowling on the first Wednesday of every month. Finally, Mental Health Court will be holding a graduation ceremony on August 2, 2016. This will be the fifteenth ceremony since Mental Health Court began.

If you have any questions please contact Jason Sterwerf (815) 334-4913.



From the Desk of the Court Administrator, —Dan Wallis

Every once in a while you need to sharpen the saw; not burn the village.



CRISIS

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A time of danger;

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A time of opportunity;



Being wrapped in red tape isn't what Abe had in mind.

I like to think that I am an even keeled, easy to get along with person. However, every once in a while I get agitated when things do not make sense or when people fail to follow through on their promises, or when people do the wrong thing. The biggest thing that agitates me is that common sense isn't so common.

Sometimes when I get agitated I have been accused of "burning the village" (a phrase coined for me by the Honorable Judge Weech when I was particularly agitated at a situation). Now I don't get particularly agitated often but when I do ...

When something doesn't make sense and there is someone in my office, I will often point to the statue sitting on my desk (the image in the left margin). I use this visual to make a point, and to help keep me from "burning the village."

I hope that I am not giving you the impression that I'm the kind of person to "fly off the handle," or a "yeller," quite the contrary, no I am much more of the "slow burn" type.

When we find ourselves in those types of situations and are becoming upset, it is important to take a step back. Actually, it is more

important to take that step back before we ever reach the point of becoming upset or disenfranchised with what we are doing. That's when we need to "sharpen the saw."

One of my favorite authors is Stephen R. Covey and in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, sharpening the saw, is the 7th Habit and you and I are the saw.

Often we hear the terms "burned out," "run out of steam," or "tired of it." When we reach this point, the saw is dull; we are dull and the energy is gone.

Imagine trying to cut down a tree with a dull saw. It's difficult, time consuming and most of all exhausting. Imagine that same tree, the saw becomes dull, so we take the time to sharpen the saw, the work becomes easier and quicker.

The 7th Habit as outlined by Covey is personal. It's about persevering and enhancing the greatest asset that we have—ourselves—and each of us need to take time away from the mission to reenergize the "batteries."

Covey breaks down the four dimensions we need to focus on, as physical, social/emotional, spiritual and mental. If we cannot take care of ourselves, how can

we help and care for those people we are here to serve?

It is important to take the time to focus on ourselves in order to better ourselves. You and I decide whether it is a vacation getaway, spending time with family and friends, or a canoe trip to the Boundary Waters that brings us rest, relaxation and balance. If all we have is just work, no matter how much we enjoy it, at some point the saw will become dull.



There are many areas and activities in our county, state and country to take advantage of and there is certainly no shortage of things to experience and do.

Do yourself a favor, make time for yourself. You will be glad you did and maybe it will spare a village or two. - Dan





Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit of McHenry County

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The mission of the 22nd Judicial Circuit of McHenry County is to be the guardian of life, liberty and property to all seeking access to justice, by adhering to practices that ensure equality, fairness and confidence in the judiciary.