



Court Planning: Charting Our Future

by *Marcus Reinkensmeyer*
Court Administrator

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The *Judicial Branch News* is an online newsletter published by the Media Relations and Community Outreach Department.

If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please send articles, news items, photos or other correspondence to: karra@superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.

"Committed to the Timely, Fair and Impartial Administration of Justice."



Working closely with county management, the court is moving forward with planned regional courthouses and programming for a new downtown criminal courts tower. These major projects are all in support of the county Master Plan which projects a county population of 4.7 million residents by the year 2015. To serve this vast community, the Superior and Justice Courts are projected to have 241 judicial officers and over 6,000 court and probation personnel.

- Southwest Regional Court – The County has purchased a 45 acre land parcel at Van Buren and 103rd Avenue. The regional court at this site is to include 12 superior court divisions, 5 justice of the peace courts, 3 regional court center/early disposition courts and adult and juvenile probation offices. The site will also have a Sheriff's substation. The target date for completion of construction is June 2009, with move-in scheduled for August 2009.
- Southeast Regional Court expansion: This project entails a major expansion of the Southeast Regional Adult Court facility, as well as a new parking ramp. The new facility will house a three court



Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell (left) and Judges Karen O'Connor (center) and Paul Katz (right) meet with an architect to discuss courtroom designs for the new criminal court tower.

regional court center/early disposition court, four justice courts, large adult and juvenile probation offices and the Assessor's Office. Target date for construction completion and move-in is August 2009.

- The three downtown DUI courts, grand jury and court security offices will move into the One West Madison building in late March 2007.

- The San Tan Regional Court in Chandler will be opening on Monday. Judges and staff from four southeast valley justice courts are opening for

Message From the Presiding Judge



Barbara Rodriguez Mundell
Presiding Judge

It takes a community to plan a criminal court tower. And through a series of forums that the court is hosting, we are listening to input from a variety of court customers and others, sharing their expertise in this important planning process.

In designing the new criminal court tower in downtown Phoenix, we hope to incorporate space within the facility for programs throughout the entire criminal process that are critical in providing swift justice, making

victims whole, reducing recidivism and making our community a safer place to live.

The court tower project provides an excellent opportunity to also build on the successes achieved in the Regional Court Centers, Early Disposition Court and Initial Pre-Trial Court, where the parties and stakeholders can come together early in the process to work out equitable and speedy settlements in appropriate cases.

Over the past several weeks, we have been gathering input from other court systems. Visits were made to New York and Pennsylvania to see newly completed court facilities and learn what types of services, amenities and space was included to provide for the needs of court visitors – including jurors, crime victims, the disabled, attorneys and the media.

Since returning from the on-site visits, court, county officials and design experts have met with a variety of community representatives who have shared their ideas on ways to assure the new court building provides accommodations for visitors with special needs.

These brainstorming sessions aren't finished yet. As they continue into April, we are hosting a half-day Leadership Forum to discuss program planning and restorative justice with key people. I and a few other members of the bench along with Court Administrator Marcus Reinkensmeyer, will

meet with County Board Chairman Fulton Brock, County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox, County Manager David Smith, Assistant County Manager Peter Ozanne, Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy David Hendershott, Clerk of the Court Michael Jeanes, Chief Assistant County Attorney Sally Wells, Chief Adult Probation Officer Barbara Broderick, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Carol Boone and others.

We have learned many things already.

Victims' advocates said crime victims should be free from intimidation, harassment or abuse throughout the criminal justice system. They said victims would benefit from secure parking and court entrances to reduce close encounters with the defendant in their case. They also said victims would benefit from a private, closed-door setting to take a break away from court hallways, meet with prosecutors, make phone calls and have internet access.

Individuals with disabilities said ideally, the court would be universally accessible in a manner that everyone can go through the process without challenges. Specific requests were made for electronic signs, direction maps with big letters and Braille, flashing lights at doors and alarms, information banners, a public announcement system with captions, infrared hearing enhancers and flooring that is slip or skid resistant.

Members of the media also were invited for their input, which focused on technology and courtroom configuration to make it more efficient for them to gather their stories and get them to their audiences as rapidly as possible.

Our forums and planning sessions will continue until the site is selected from five possibilities and the details of what will be included in the court tower are determined.

Critical to this very important project is the leadership and support of the Board of Supervisors and Office of Budget and Management. We thank them for providing us the opportunity to work with them, their experts and the community to create an outstanding court facility, projected to open in 2011 or 2012.

Plan on joining us at the grand opening!

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business at 8 a.m., Monday, March 26 at the new courthouse, 201 E. Chicago Street. A ribbon-cutting celebration is planned for 10 a.m., April 3.

- The Board of Supervisors has approved funding for a new downtown Early Disposition Court/Regional Court Center and justice agency offices in the central court building basement. Procurement is underway and the project is to be completed in June 2008.

- Planning for the proposed downtown criminal courthouse is well underway. Judges and court managers are meeting with county officials and Gould Evans-DMJM architects regarding workload and

staffing projections, operational requirements, courtroom design scenarios and site selection. The programming phase of the project is to be completed and presented to the Board of Supervisors in May 2007. Assuming that the project moves forward, it is targeted for completion in 2011 or 2012.

Our sincere thanks to the Board of Supervisors and county management for their strong support in meeting our long-term court space needs. Thanks also go to our judicial officers and court staff for their participation in these space planning efforts.

Judicial Branch Newsmakers

School Honors Commissioner



Julie Newell
Court Commissioner

Commissioner Julie Newell was featured in a recent issue of Oklahoma City University School of Law's magazine entitled *Women of Law*. The issue honored the outstanding women graduates of the law school.

Before law school, Commissioner Newell was the first female police officer for the town of Thornton, Colorado and worked as a security manager for Motorola. She also worked for the CIA for six years.

After working for 16 years, she went to law school and earned her Juris Doctorate. Following graduation, she landed a job with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office as a prosecutor. She has served as a commissioner since 2000.

View From the Bench Wrap-up

The 2006-2007 View from the Bench program has concluded. This past year, 15 legislators each shadowed a Superior Court judge, and 22 judges each followed an Arizona legislator for a day.

"This program is a wonderful opportunity to encourage ongoing communication between the judicial and legislative branches. Although 2006 was an election year, the program was a resounding success with more participants than last year from both branches," Community Outreach Director Patricia Seguin said.

View from the Bench is designed to foster communication between judges and legislators and educate each group on the other group's day-to-day tasks.

Juvenile Probation: Teen Court is Keeping Kids Out of Trouble

If peer pressure gets kids into trouble, it should be able to keep kids out of trouble or at least set them straight when they stray.

Data from Maricopa County's recent Managing for Results suggests that Teen Court in Maricopa County is working. In Fiscal Year 2006, ninety-four percent of juveniles that completed Teen Court in Maricopa County did not commit another delinquent act within 12 months of completing the program.

Teen Court serves as an educational opportunity for some students and a diversion program for others. Juveniles participating as defendants in the program have admitted responsibility for the delinquent act in question, and have agreed to have their sentence determined by their peers. Teen Court juries determine the consequence, which may include writing a letter of apology, completion of educational classes, or performing community service. As part of the consequence, most

defendants are also required to serve as a juror during future Teen Court hearings. Teen Court not only provides the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about how the legal system functions, but also provides experience and exposure to its operation. Juveniles may participate as an attorney, juror, bailiff, or clerk, and, on occasion, even as the judge.

Cases heard in Teen Court are diversion eligible offenses like shoplifting, trespassing and criminal damage. The cases are referred from the Juvenile Probation Department and Limited Jurisdiction Courts, or involve discipline issues referred from participating schools.

Probation officers are assigned to Teen Court to monitor each juvenile's compliance with court consequences, screen and select appropriate cases, interview each respective juvenile and family to ensure they are willing to participate in the process, supervise the preparation time for lawyers, jurors, peer jury and others, and coordinate the Teen Court hearings. Probation

officers also train participants, volunteers and others.

With the support of the Superior Court, Juvenile Court, Limited Jurisdiction Courts and Board of Supervisors, the program is expected to continue to grow. The Juvenile Probation Department is partnering with the Valley of the Sun YMCA to expand the opportunity for juveniles across Maricopa County to participate in Teen Court programs.

Teen Court started as an educational exercise for students at Tempe High School 15 years ago and has expanded to more than 30 different schools in the Valley. It also operates within 7 Limited Jurisdiction Courts across Maricopa County.

For more information contact:
Program Manager Jean Gedney
602-506-5084
(jeaged@juvenile.maricopa.gov).

Story submitted by
Frank Groenewold

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

Juvenile Court: Provides Youth with Information

Historically, children have been shielded from the court dependency process. They were not kept informed and did not have a voice.

But on March 27, dependent children in Maricopa County Superior Court will begin learning more about their futures.

Teens from the Sunshine Residential Home will attend juvenile court's first *Court Orientation for Dependent Youth* at the Durango Juvenile Court Facility to find out about court dependency procedures.

"Youth are best served by Juvenile Court when they are active, engaged participants in their cases. Youth who are empowered to voice their needs, hopes, and dreams help judicial officers make well informed decisions affecting their lives," Presiding Juvenile Judge Eileen Willett said. "This program is designed to encourage children to come to Court, become more aware of the dependency case process, and tell us what we need to know to help youth reach their full potential. Juvenile Court belongs to the children and families we serve. Giving youth the opportunity to be heard in their own words and helping them develop the confidence they need to voice their concerns will greatly benefit children, the Court, and the entire child welfare system."

The program allows youth residing in foster or group care to hear from judicial officers, attorneys and child protective workers regarding their respective roles in the dependency court process, and allow them to ask general questions. The orientation, chaired

by Juvenile Court Commissioner Peter Thompson takes place during extended court hours so kids do not miss school. The participating teens are also provided a dependency court booklet. The booklet is designed to give relevant information, and serve as a holding place for the youth's important documents, contact information and memorabilia from friends and family.

"Children and older youth involved in dependency court are often victims of the inadequate or inappropriate actions of their parents or guardians. This program provides them with the knowledge that they need to be empowered in a system that is designed to provide for their best interest," Juvenile Court Administrator Sheila Tickle said. "Gaining a more thorough understanding of court matters gives these children and youth the necessary tools to voice their concerns and opinions in the matters that affect their lives today and will impact them in adulthood in the future."

During the development of the program, an invaluable perspective was provided by foster care alumni, the Juvenile Court judiciary, Superior Court Administration, the Attorney General's Office, Office of the Legal Advocate and Legal Defender, Child Protective Services and Casey Family Programs.

"It is incumbent upon the Juvenile Court and all of its participating stakeholders that children and families who become part of the dependency court process are treated with respect and dignity," Commissioner Thompson said.

Administration

Court Administration hired Christopher Bleuenstein as its new program manager in Superior Court operations, a position made available through the recent reorganization.

Bleuenstein has worked as a consultant for non-profit agencies and as a trial court administrator in North Dakota. He holds a masters degree in public policy and political science.

"Chris will help us with case flow and operations," General Jurisdiction Courts Administrator Phil Knox said.

In Memoriam



Former Maricopa County Superior Court Judge and 1979 Phoenix woman of the year, Dorothy M. Carson died at the age of 82 on

March 1st. Carson sat on the Superior Court Bench from 1974 to 1984. Prior to joining Superior Court, she served five years as the first woman Municipal Court judge in Phoenix history.

Before becoming a judge, Carson, a member of the Arizona, California, and Utah State Bars, practiced as an attorney for 20 years. She graduated from Utah State University in 1945 and was one of only six women to graduate from Stanford Law School in 1948. She is survived by her husband, Roy; son Scott; daughter Dee and eight grandchildren.

Court Briefs

News from around the Court

CTS: Network Drives Can Save You

It is critical that work product such as Microsoft Word and Excel documents are saved on network drives and not "C" drives or the hard drive contained within a PC. Court Technology Services replaces about four hard drives a week that have failed. If an employee had any work product stored on a failed hard drive, the work product is not retrievable and forever lost.

When using network drives to store files. Please note the following:

1. Each employee with a computer has a "user" or "home drive" where they can store work product files.

2. The network drives are not for storing music, personal photographs or any other files that are not work product.

3. CTS backs up network drives every night and the backup media is sent off-site to a secured location each morning. C drives are not backed up.

4. The CTS Help Desk, reachable via email at CTS Technical Support or at 602 506-6311, can help an individual with the use of their user or home drive.

Story submitted by Kevin Westover

Law Library

Tip of the Month: The Law Library is your WiFi Spot

Have you been looking for a place to use your laptop on your lunch hour to check email or surf the net? Look no further than the Superior Court Law Library. You are invited to explore the Law Library's fast Internet network using your own wireless-enabled laptop computer or PDAs. Free access is provided in all public areas on the second floor of the library.

The library has bookmarks available with the necessary instructions. But here are a few other pieces of information that you might need to know before you access our WiFi:

- The connection to the internet is filtered by a proxy server.
- The Law Library's Internet Use Policy can be found at www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/lawlibrary/Documents/Html/Policies/internetusepolicyrev2.asp
- You will not be able to print to the library printer from a wireless connected device.

The Law Library has a bookmark ready for you to take that gives you the instructions you need to start using the wifi access today! Stop by our Reference Desk to pick up one. You can also contact the Law Library at (602) 506-63461, or services@sccl.maricopa.gov.

If you have questions about this or other Law Library services, please let us know. Our mission is to provide the Court with timely, efficient, and reliable access to legal information! We welcome the opportunity to help you with your legal information needs.

Story submitted by Jennifer Murray

Water Master



Special Master George A. Schade, Jr.

Special Master George A. Schade, Jr. has moved to the Central Court Building. The Water Master, a statutory position appointed by the Superior Court of Arizona, hears matters regarding the Gila River and Little Colorado River.

Litigated since the 1970s, these cases seek to adjudicate over 85,000 water right claims filed by 30,000 private, state, federal, and tribal claimants.

More information is available at www.supreme.state.az.us/wm.

Submitted by George A. Schade, Jr.

Focus On Employee Service Awards



(Right to Left) Court employees Mary Lou Strehle, Robert LaBorde, Wanda Hill, Lillie Vital and Scherene Murphy display their awards following a February Maricopa County employee awards ceremony in the Board of Supervisors auditorium in Phoenix. Maricopa County honored employees with more than 30 years of service.

Mary Lou Strehle
35 years



Throughout her career, Family Court Administrator Mary Lou Strehle has worked many distinctive posts including regional administrator at the Southeast Facility in Mesa and Director of Human Resources and Judicial Support Services. Before her career with Superior Court, she was associate clerk for Administrative Services with the Clerk of the Superior Court in Maricopa County.

Shawn Robblee
35 years

Shawn Robblee has worked for Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department the past 35 years. He has worked various assignments during that time including detention, standard and intensive probation, investigative unit and safe schools. He currently is assigned to a probation caseload in Glendale out of the West Valley Community Justice Center.

Patricia Riggs
35 years

Patricia Riggs has worked in all departments of Juvenile Probation. She has watched the department grow from one building in the middle of a hog farm to a complex multi-faceted organization. Riggs is a great story teller who has become an unofficial historian of the department.

Keith Swalley
35 years

Keith Swalley has worked with the Juvenile Probation Department for 35 years, the last 16 years as a supervisor.

He has been part of the development of specialty programs within Juvenile Intensive Probation.

Linda Jett
34 years

Linda Jett began her work with Maricopa County in 1979. She worked in the civil department as a calendar clerk for many years. She was promoted to supervisor in 1988. Currently, she supervises the Early Disposition Court for the criminal department.

Wanda Hill
33 years

Wanda Hill began her career with Maricopa County in January 1973 as a deputy court reporter. She has been working as a judicial assistant in Judge Steven Sheldon's division for the past 17 years.



Employee service awards - continued on page 7

Employee Service Awards

Scherene Murphy
33 years



Scherene Murphy began her career with Maricopa County in September of 1973 as a legal secretary in the Public Defenders Office. During her career, she worked for many judges as a judicial assistant. She is currently assigned to Judge Steven Sheldon's division as a bailiff.

William Lawlor
32 years

William Lawlor of Court Technology Services started his career with Maricopa County working in Elections doing voter registration verification work. In 1984, he joined the county's computer department, DTIS, as a mainframe operator. In 1988, DTIS employees were redistributed to the various county computer agencies that were being formed, and Lawlor came to work for the court's computer department CTS.

Lillee Villegas Vital
33 years



Lillee Villegas Vital has worked as an administrative assistant for Justice Court Services for the past three years. Before joining Justice Court Services, she worked for the Self-Service Center and Guadalupe Municipal Court. Throughout Vital's career, her dedication to her job and bilingual skills have proven to be extremely valuable to the court system.

Robert Louis LaBorde
30 years



Robert LaBorde started his career with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office at the age of 18 as a Detention Officer, spending most of his time in the Security and Transport Division. During the course of his duties, he interacted with court staff and developed a great knowledge of the inter-workings of the court system and the needs of judges and court staff. This has proven to be beneficial to his new duties as an officer with Court Security.



Awards lined up prior to the employee awards ceremony.

Courtside

Photo Highlights In the News



Top Left - Judge Mark Aceto, pictured with his staff, became the presiding civil judge on March 21st. Judge Anna Baca, the former presiding civil judge, will become the new criminal presiding judge. She will focus on case management for capital cases and learn the duties of presiding criminal judge before she assumes that calendar in June.

Middle Left - Special Court Counsel Jessica Funkhouser hands Communications Director J.W. Brown her 10-year service pin.



Bottom Left - Victim advocates from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office offer their suggestions to court administration regarding the building of the new court tower.

Bottom Right - A Grand Prix car races past spectators standing near the East Court Building in Downtown Phoenix during sound testing for a race in December.

