

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS  
SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS



625 MARSHALL STREET  
SUITE 1100  
LITTLE ROCK, AR  
72201-1020

TEL: (501) 682-9400  
FAX: (501) 682-9410  
TDD: (501) 682-9412  
EMAIL: aoc@arkansas.gov

PRESS HANDOUT

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Hot Spring County makes history again! On May 2, 2016, Hot Spring District Court will be the first District Court to begin electronic filing for Civil and Small Claims cases. Electronic filing for Criminal and Traffic cases are scheduled to begin in July. This is the final phase of the State's second court electronic filing project. The project is being conducted in two phases, with the first phase in the Circuit Courts of Hot Spring County and Grant County and the second phase in Hot Spring County District Court. Pulaski County Circuit Court was the first to use electronic filing in 2012. The electronic filing system allows attorneys and self-represented litigants to file court documents online. More than 2000 attorneys have registered to use the electronic filing system. Arkansas attorneys in good standing can register at any time. Self-represented (or pro se) litigants may register to file a new case or to file documents on an existing case in a court that has mandated electronic filing.

To file electronically, everyone must complete three steps. First, they must register for and attend a one-hour online training session at <http://www.tybera.com/Arkansas.htm>. Attorneys will be eligible to receive 1 hour of general CLE credit for attending training. Second, they must request an account through the eFile website at <https://efile.aoc.arkansas.gov>. Finally, they must send a check in the amount of \$100 made payable to Bar of Arkansas to the following address: Arkansas Electronic Filing Registration, Administrative Office of the Courts, 625 Marshall Street, Justice Building, Little Rock, AR 72201. Attorneys are required to include their bar number and email address with the check. Self-represented litigants must also submit an Affidavit in Support of ProSe Request for Electronic Filing Account. Filing fees may be paid online by credit card, eCheck, or by subscribing to the Information Network of Arkansas (INA), which will provide billing services for filing fees. Information about INA subscriptions is available online at <https://www.ark.org/subscribe/index.php>.

Electronic filing in Arkansas courts is governed by Arkansas Supreme Court Administrative Order Number 21. The order mandates use of electronic filing after certain conditions are met. Once implemented, use of the electronic filing system in all cases or a particular type of case is mandatory only if: (1) the court provides a mechanism for waiving electronic fees in appropriate circumstances; (2) the court allows for the exceptions needed to ensure access to justice for indigent, disabled, self-represented, and other litigants who have special needs; (3) the court provides adequate advance notice of the mandatory participation requirement; (4) the court provides a one-year transition period during which any document may be filed conventionally or electronically, and the court provides notice during the transition period about electronic filing to all parties filing a document conventionally; and (5) the court provides training for filers in the use of the process.

Grant and Hot Spring Counties have been leaders in Arkansas court automation for 10 years. Electronic filing is the latest opportunity for the counties to once again lead the way. Hot Spring County was the first county in the state to have both circuit and district courts fully automated on the State's case management system. In 2004, the circuit court was the second in the state to start using the jury management program. In 2007, the district court became the third in the state to start using the Contexte case management system. In 2008, the circuit court was the first in the state to use Contexte to manage civil, domestic, and probate cases. In 2009, the district court was among the first to take online payments. In 2013, the district court was the first in

Arkansas to receive electronic citations from the Arkansas State Police.

Hot Spring and Grant County officials have been instrumental in the success of the Arkansas Court Automation Programs. Judges Chris Williams and Sherry Burnett have served on the Supreme Court Committee on Automation, which selected the system and guides its implementation. District Court Clerk Melba Russell served on the Core Team for the automation program. Mayme Brown, Circuit Clerk of Hot Spring County, Sandy Boyette, County Clerk of Hot Spring County, and Carol Ewing, Circuit and County Clerk of Grant County have participated in extensive training and testing for the court systems.

As statewide rollout of the court automation systems continues, Grant and Hot Spring County judges and clerks will continue to play leadership roles in bringing 21st century technology to the Arkansas judiciary.

For further information, contact:

Alex Rogers

AOC PMO Manager

501-410-1901

[Alex.Rogers@arcourts.gov](mailto:Alex.Rogers@arcourts.gov)