



Friends OF THE COURT

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Governor Signs Court Technology Improvement Act 28



ACAP “Team” pose for a picture with Governor Beebe after he signed Act 328 into law. Standing next to Governor Beebe, (left to right) Rep. John Paul Wells, Supreme Court Associate Justice Annabelle Imber, Circuit Judge Vann Smith, and JD Gingerich-AOC Dir.

On March 9, 2009, House Bill 1353, the Court Technology Improvement Act of 2009, became Act 328 of 2009. The bill was signed by Governor Mike Beebe in the Governor’s Conference Room at the State Capitol. The bill was sponsored by Rep. John Paul Wells and Senator David Johnson.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a structure for the perpetual staffing and operation of the case and jury management systems being implemented through the Arkansas Court Automation Project (ACAP). Until now, ACAP has primarily been funded by half of the installment fees levied on defendants unable to pay all their fines and costs at once. With Act 328, other participants in the judicial system will support the cost of bringing Arkansas court technology into

the 21st century. The Act provides for courts to accept payments online, assess fees for online access and electronic filing, and most importantly imposes a \$15 court technology fee for most civil case filings.

With previous levels of funding, ACAP has implemented the case management system in five district courts and one circuit court, and implemented the jury management system in forty-four counties since beginning in 2002. With the additional funding, ACAP will be able to expand staff for support and implementation and to fund projects for online juror access, public access to court information, online payments, and electronic filing.

The ceremonial signing at the Capitol was attended by Supreme Court Associate Justice Annabelle Clinton-Imber, JD Gingerich-AOC

Director, Circuit Judge Vann Smith-Chair of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Automation, other members of the Committee and clerks from the ACAP pilot courts: Treva Lambert-Montgomery County District Court Clerk, Donna Clifton-Faulkner County District Court Clerk, Melba Russell-Hot Spring County District Court Clerk, Fever McElyea-Carlisle District Court, Sue Jones-Hot Spring County Circuit Clerk, Rhonda Long Wharton-Faulkner County Circuit Clerk, and Cindy Gilmer-Sebastian County Circuit Clerk. After the signing, attendees shared lunch at the Justice Building where Justice Paul Danielson presented each of the seven pilot court clerks with a pen used by Governor Beebe when signing House Bill 1353 into law.

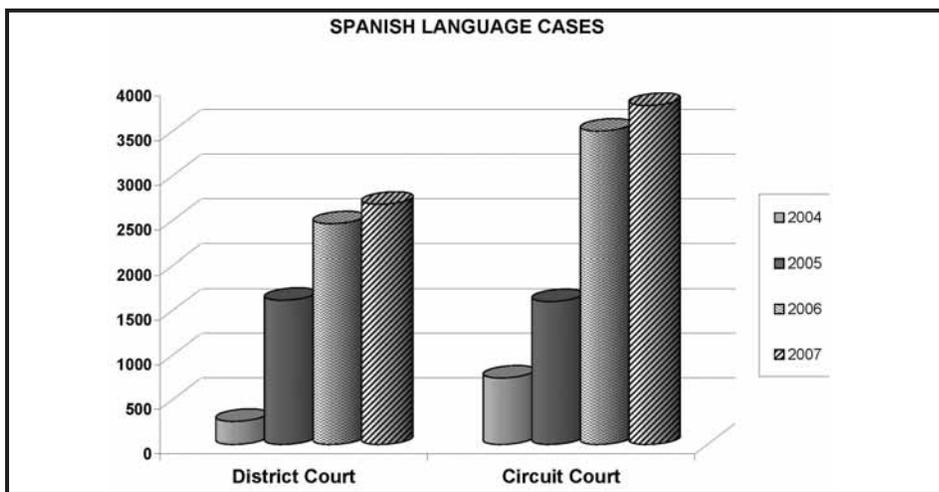
List of Certified Interpreters Grows As Assignments Increase

The need for foreign language interpreters in Arkansas's courts has grown significantly. As the chart below indicates, district court and circuit court cases requiring an interpreter have grown significantly since 2004. At present there are 14 certified interpreters (including two AOC staff interpreters and 16 non-certified interpreters (7 full time/9 part time). The 21 full time interpreters, on any given day, have 236 courts to cover.

For further information about scheduling foreign language interpreters, contact Mara Simmons/Program Director mara.simmons@arkansas.gov, Stephanie Minor/Administrative Assistant stephanie.minor@arkansas.gov, and Jason Daniel/Staff Certified Spanish Interpreter jason.daniel@arkansas.gov. For a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired, contact Laney Yates/Staff Sign Language Interpreter laney.yates@arkansas.gov. Contact for all by phone: Administrative Office of the Courts, (501) 682-9400.



In late 2008, newly certified court interpreters were presented certificates by Chief Justice Jim Hannah. (l. to r.) Debbie Andrade, Maria Barandiaran, Chief Justice Hannah, Mara Simmons/Program Director, Laney Yates, Liz Yates and JD Gingerich/AOC Director.



As mentioned in earlier issues of "Friends of the Court", employees in the Justice Building have been using cost savings means to get to and from work. Some are car pooling and others have begun riding the city bus. However, Michial Armstrong/ Help Desk Agent for the Arkansas Court Automation Project, has taken another approach. He is now biking to and from his home each day. The Justice Building now has a bike rack and Michial is making use of the new equipment.



Michial Armstrong alongside his means of transportation.



Trial Court Assistants Hold Annual Meeting

Trial Court Assistants (TCA) met in Little Rock recently for their annual meeting. 82 registered for the two day conference. Their agenda included updates and presentations on foreign language interpreters in the court, juvenile courts, the Arkansas Court Automation Project (ACAP), the Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission, the Committee on Professional Conduct, caseload management, trial court management, drug courts and dealing with negative stress.

Chief Justice Jim Hannah presented plaques to eight trial court assistants who have over 25 years of service to the State. Those receiving plaques included: Janet Smith/12th Cir., Tommi Fell/6th Cir., Andrea Hicks/1st Cir., Jerlene Eason/6th

Cir., Martha Williams/9th W. Cir. (formerly), Rosie Tolbert/6th Cir., Debbie Hall/6th Cir., and Ginger Hall/20th Cir.

Officers and Representatives at Large for the 2008 - 2009 term are

President-Eunice Dunkin, Vice President-Joyce Morgan, Secretary-Susan McGehee, Treasurer-Vickie Evans, Rep. at Large-Polly Leimburg, Rep. at Large-Kim Dodson, and Past President-Barbie Reed.



Trial Court Assistants Elected Officers 2008-2009 (l. to r.) Barbie Reed (12th) - Past President, Polly Leimberg (14th) - Rep. at Large, Kim Dodson (12th) - Rep. at Large, Eunice Duncan (14th) - President, Joyce Morgan (2nd) - Vice President, Susan McGehee (20th) - Secretary, and Vickie Evans (13th) - Treasurer.

New Courthouse Security Measures Taking Place in Grant County

Seventh Judicial District Judge Phillip Shirron and his Trial Court Assistant, Darlene Walters, are making use of cameras and screens for their security in the Grant County Courthouse nowadays. The Grant County Sheriff moved across the street, leaving them with no security detail other than the court bailiff.

There are three cameras currently placed in the courthouse which project activity outside their office. The cameras allow Judge Shirron and Walters to watch from their individual screens those coming and going outside their office, down the hall and at the courthouse front door. A new door to their suite of offices is on order and due to be installed in April. It will allow either Judge Shirron or Walters to view who is at the door before pressing a button to allow visitors to enter into their office. Both Walters and Judge Shirron also have an alarm button, connected to the

Sheriff's Office, to press if an emergency occurs.

In addition to the cameras, viewing screens, and alarm buttons, a bullet proof shield has been installed behind

the judge's bench in the courtroom. Both Walters and Judge Shirron are pleased to now have this added security in the Grant County Courthouse.



Judge Phillip Shirron/7th Circuit and his Trial Court Assistant, Darlene Walters, with one of their new security screens.



New faces in the Judiciary

City Court Clerks

Parkin — **Katrina Bohanon**

replaces Tonia Wyllia.

Black Rock and Hoxie — **Debbie**

Downing replaces Terrell

Downing.

District Court Clerks

Magnolia — **Joyce S. Gagnon**

replaces Sandra Wilson.

Harrisburg— **Penny Roberts**

replaces Martha Mills.

Central City — **Cindy Dubois**

replaces Paula Schoen.

AOC

Kyle Hawkins — ACAP Contract

Help Desk.

Jacob Christian — ACAP

Contract Help Desk.

Trial Court Assistants

6th (Gray) — **Diana Williams**

replaces Deborah Rhodes.

1st (Simes) — **Tiffany Davis**

replaces Princess Burnside.

6th (Piazza) — **Sherri Colbert**

replaces Melissa West.

Correction:

In listing the newly retired judges in the Jan. issue, Judge David Burnett/1st Cir. was inadvertently left out.

CALENDAR

April

Drug Court Conference **16-17**
(Little Rock)

District Judges **23-24**

Spring College
District Court Clerks Annual Mtg.
(Hot Springs)

May

Children in the Courts **6-8**
(Little Rock)

June

Spring Judicial College- **10-12**
Judicial Council Meeting

(Hot Springs)

ADR-2009 Basic Mediation **15-19**
(Little Rock)

August

District Court Clerks **14**
Certification-Chief Clerks
(Little Rock)

ADR-2009 Family **19-21**
Mediation
(Little Rock)



Friends of the Court

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Address Correction Requested

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are welcome.

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Karolyn Bond, Editor.