

November 2, 2009

Subject: Judicial Branch Automating and Centralizing the Processing of Payable Citations

Dear Law Enforcement Agency Leader:

I am writing to all law enforcement agency leaders to inform you of an important initiative taking place in the Judicial Branch related to payable citations. As an essential step in meeting the budget challenges facing our criminal justice system, the Judicial Branch has embarked on an effort to centralize and streamline the processing of the more than one million payable citations processed each year.

While primarily a court business matter, the transition will involve law enforcement, so we're asking you to spread the word among your members and employees about this important advance in Minnesota's justice system.

The Judicial Council has set an ambitious goal of transferring the recording and processing of citation payments from 85 courts to a new Court Payment Center by the start of the next biennium (July 1, 2011). Hennepin and Ramsey counties will follow thereafter. Local court administrators will be contacting area law enforcement as their court prepares for implementation.

The new process will accommodate the electronic filing of citations by law enforcement, which is already occurring in several jurisdictions, as well as paper citations. It will offer defendants the option of paying by mail, on-line through the Judicial Branch website, or through use of a voice-activated payment and information telephone service. A statewide call center is being created to answer questions and otherwise assist defendants.

The new process will also automate the distribution of payments to municipalities, the state general fund, and other designated recipients, which we expect will improve accuracy and speed payment. Work on the phased implementation began this fall.

As part of the effort, the Judicial Branch has partnered with the Department of Public Safety and the State Patrol to develop a mutually beneficial standardized paper citation that should improve accuracy and speed processing. It is currently anticipated that the new standard citation will be available around the first of the year; your agency will be contacted when it is finalized and ready for use.

Maintaining the vitality of Minnesota's criminal justice system in a time of constrained public resources will be a challenge for all involved. Centralizing payable citation processing is one way the Judicial Branch is working to reduce the cost of operations while improving public service.

We will continue to convey important details to your agencies as this process is implemented in the months ahead. In addition, rest assured that court administrators will work closely with law enforcement agencies and officers in their respective counties, as they do now, to ensure the smooth and timely transition of these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sue K. Dosal".

Sue K. Dosal
State Court Administrator

cc: Chief Justice Eric J. Magnuson