



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH**

First Judicial District

Mission: To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

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The First Judicial District has 36 judges and more than 250 staff that handle nearly 150,000 cases annually in the counties of Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott and Sibley.

The First Edition

A Newsletter about the First Judicial District of the State of Minnesota

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OCTOBER 2014

Chief Justice Gildea Accepts eCourtMN Innovation Award

The Minnesota Judicial Branch's eCourtMN Initiative received a 2014 State Government Innovation Award during a ceremony at the Minnesota History Center on Thursday, August 7, 2014. The award, presented by the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center, is



Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea and Jay Kiedrowski, Senior Fellow in the Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs

designed to recognize the great work of state government agencies and encourage an environment of experimentation and innovation in Minnesota.

"Throughout the Judicial Branch, we are implementing an ambitious redesign agenda that is utilizing new technologies and reengineered business practices to make Minnesota's court system more accessible, more efficient, and more transparent," said Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea, who accepted the award on behalf of the Judicial Branch. "The eCourtMN Initiative is the centerpiece of these efforts, and we are so proud to have this recognition and are honored by this award."

The eCourtMN Initiative is transforming the state's

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court system by replacing paper-based court files with an electronic information environment. Through eCourtMN, court documents will be filed and served electronically, while judges and court staff will be given new tools to review, sign, and process court documents on their computers. The electronic delivery and transfer of court documents will produce considerable efficiencies in court operations and faster results for court customers. In addition, the

eCourtMN Initiative will increase access to court information for the public and government agencies.

The eCourtMN Initiative began in 2011, and is being completed in four phases, each lasting approximately one year. The Minnesota Judicial Branch has completed the first two phases of the initiative, including an 11-county pilot project where electronic filing and service of court documents was tested and refined. The Branch is currently testing

the electronic tools that judges and court staff will use in the courthouse, and will begin the process of expanding electronic filing and service of court documents to the rest of Minnesota's 87 counties next year.

More information on the 2014 State Government Innovation Awards can be found at <http://sgja.umn.edu/>. More information on the eCourtMN Initiative can be found at <http://www.mncourts.gov/ecourtmn>.

Governor Dayton Appoints Braaten, Lehmann, Looby, and McCollum to Fill First Judicial District Vacancies

On September 15, 2014, Governor Mark Dayton announced the appointment of Mr. Eric J. Braaten, Mr. Christopher J. Lehmann, Mr. Timothy J. Looby, and Ms. Cynthia L. McCollum as District Court Judges in Minnesota's First Judicial District. Mr. Braaten will be replacing the Honorable Richard C. Perkins, and will be chambered at Chaska in Carver County. Mr. Timothy J. Looby will be replacing the Honorable Thomas G. McCarthy, and will be chambered at Gaylord in Sibley County. Mr. Christopher J. Lehmann and Ms. Cynthia

L. McCollum will be replacing the Honorable Richard G. Spicer and the Honorable Robert R. King, Jr., and will both be chambered at Hastings in Dakota County.

"I have great confidence that Mr. Braaten, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Looby, and Ms. McCollum will provide excellent service to the people of the First Judicial District," said Governor Dayton. "Their legal credentials, strong work ethics, and demonstrated service to their communities have prepared each of them well for these important positions."

Minnesota's First Judicial District consists of Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott, and Sibley Counties.

More information on the Commission on Judicial Selection, as well as vacancies it is currently considering, can be found at <http://mn.gov/governor/appointments/judicial-appointments/>.



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Eric J. Braaten

Eric J. Braaten is an attorney at Braaten & Braaten, P.A., where his practice focuses on family law, including dissolutions, adoptions, paternity, custody, and various post-dissolution enforcement issues. Mr. Braaten also serves as a mediator, and previously practiced at the law firms of Nicklaus Braaten & Hollenhorst, P.L.L.C., and Katz & Manka Ltd. He has received the NorthStar Service Award for his commitment to pro bono service, and earned his B.A. from Saint Olaf College and his J.D. from the Marquette University Law School.

Mr. Braaten has extensive appellate court experience, is a member of the Carver County Low Fee Family Law Panel, and is active in his three children's school activities.



Christopher J. Lehmann

Christopher J. Lehmann is a partner at Grannis & Lehmann, P.A., where his practice consists of estate planning, wills, probate matters, residential real estate transactions, and family law. Mr. Lehmann also serves as an Assistant Public Defender for the First Judicial District, and previously was an Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Paul. He earned his B.A. from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN and his J.D. from the William Mitchell College of Law.

Mr. Lehmann is a South St. Paul City Councilmember, and the President of the South Metro Fire Department Joint Powers Board and the Dakota County Bar Association.



Timothy J. Looby

Timothy J. Looby is a partner at Melchert Hubert Sjodin, P.L.L.P., where he practices in family law, including marriage dissolutions, child custody, and spousal maintenance. Previously, his practice has also consisted of wills, real estate, business, employment, criminal, and municipal law. He earned his B.S. from Bemidji State University and his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Mr. Looby is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, a volunteer attorney coach and judge for the Minnesota State Bar Association state high school mock trial program, and a member of the Waconia Lions Club.



Cynthia L. McCollum

Cynthia L. McCollum is a senior attorney in the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office, where she supervises a team of lawyers and maintains a caseload of adult felony, adult misdemeanor, and juvenile cases. Ms. McCollum also serves as an adjunct professor of law at the William Mitchell College of Law and the Hamline University School of Law. She earned her B.A. from the University of Minnesota and her J.D. from the William Mitchell College of Law.

Ms. McCollum has been Lead Faculty or Co-Director of the North Star Regional Trial Skills Program for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, and is the former Chair of the Board of Directors for the Minnetonka Anchor Club.



Court Technology Fund Advisory Board Completes Review of Applications

The Court Technology Fund Advisory Board, appointed by the Minnesota Judicial Council, has completed its review of applications for 2014 Technology Fund Awards. The Court Technology Fund was established by the 2013 Legislature. Pursuant to Minnesota Statute §357.021, Subdivision 2b, effective July 1, 2013, court administrators collect a \$2 technology fee on case filings listed in Minnesota Statute §357.021, Subdivision 1a (1-13).

The statute also provides that the Judicial Council, or a board appointed by the Council, shall distribute funds collected to courts and their justice partners for acquisition, development, support, maintenance, and upgrades to computer systems; equipment

and devices; network systems; electronic records; filings and payment systems; interactive video conferencing; and online services.

The Board received 26 applications during its initial funding cycle. It is anticipated that there is approximately \$1 million available for distribution. The Judicial Council will review the Board's recommendations at its October 16 meeting and awards will be distributed in December 2014.

The Judicial Council will report to the Legislature on or before January 15, 2015, on the amounts collected and expended in the previous biennium, including a list of fund recipients, the amounts awarded to each

recipient, and the technology purpose funded.

The Court Technology Fund Advisory Board consists of 10 members from the Judicial Branch and its justice partners, including prosecutors, public defenders, and representatives from corrections and civil legal services. The Judicial Branch members are State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba (Chair), Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Peter Cahill, and Information Technology Division Director Mark Moore.

Any questions about the Court Technology Fund or the application process can be sent to the State Court Administrator's Office - Finance Division Director Dan Ostdiek at Dan.Ostdiek@courts.state.mn.us.



Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM) Annual Awards

The Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM) announced the recipients of its 2014 awards at its annual meeting in September 2014.



*First Judicial District Administrator
Jerry Winter*

Jerry Winter, First Judicial District Administrator, received the 2014 MACM Lifetime Achievement Award for his many contributions to the court management profession and for his years of service to the court community. Jerry has worked in court administration for almost 40 years. Following graduation from the Denver University College of

Law with a Master's Degree in Judicial Administration, Jerry was employed by the Oregon Supreme Court as a management analyst and judicial planner. In 1980, he moved to Minnesota accepting a position as the Fifth Judicial District Administrator. Thereafter, Jerry became the First Judicial District Administrator in 1985. Jerry has been an influential leader in the Minnesota Judicial Branch. During his tenure he has served on numerous state, district, and county committees. Most important, perhaps, he was appointed by Chief Justice Blatz to serve as Chairperson of the Transformation Workgroup, which developed alternatives to the governance structure of the Minnesota Judicial Branch and ultimately resulted in the creation of the current Judicial Council. He subsequently served as a charter member of the Judicial Council and on many other important committees. Jerry brings to his position a wealth of knowledge and experience, and he uniquely manages others and achieves successful results through the strength of his gentle personality. His thoughtful and

cooperative approach is both effective and appreciated. His administrative skills are simply unsurpassed. Over the course of his career, Jerry has provided the very best service and made countless contributions to the judiciary at both the state and local levels. His is justifiably admired and respected throughout our branch of government for his professionalism, expertise, accomplishments, and who he is as a person.

Annette Fritz, Court Administrator, Washington County District Court, Tenth Judicial District, received the 2014 MACM Distinguished Service Award for her demonstrated leadership to Washington County Courts and the Minnesota Judicial Branch. She has worked for Minnesota courts for 26 years. She is deeply dedicated to the Minnesota Judicial Branch and makes significant contributions to the success of the courts. Annette is committed to excellence and strives for quality and efficiency in all aspects of her work. She has been an active member of MACM for

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21 years serving as a committee chair and on the Executive Board. She is dedicated to education and the advancement of staff and colleagues. She coordinates training and educational opportunities such as recent district wide judgment training. Annette is a faculty for the court management program and has organized several training sessions for justice partners. She is active with the eCourtMN implementation including the advancement of communication and problem solving through the eCourt pilot court administrator group. Annette led Washington County through the successful implementation of imaging, electronic file and serve, and as early adopter of the eSignature solution. In addition to her work in the courts, she is active in her community. Annette is a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management.

Sue Halpern, Court Operations Supervisor, Washington County, received the MACM 2014 Coach/Mentor of the Year Award for her demonstrated outstanding mentoring, coaching, and development of her employees. She has worked for Minnesota Courts since 1985.

Sue is a person who is an expert in her area; she recognizes herself as a mentor and coach and has opened herself up to others. She has taught and mentored many individuals for the courts for more than 15 years. She not only coaches and mentors her own staff and peers in Washington County, but Sue has traveled all over the state to mentor individuals. She recently participated as a mentor in the Merging Minds program and took great pleasure from the experience. Sue is inquisitive, is a constant learner and she loves to share what she has learned with others. Sue leads by example, is action-oriented and likes to see the best outcomes, but is not afraid to tell it like it is and deal with concerns. Sue is a subject matter expert in the areas of juvenile protection and adoption. Her passion, knowledge, and resources in her field of expertise have made significant improvements in our processes and procedures. She is continually researching, learning, and sharing with other supervisors. Sue has served on MACM Legislative Committee and various state and local committees. Sue is a certified court manager.



Goodhue County Court Operations Supervisor Vanessa Jeske

Vanessa Jeske, Court Operations Supervisor, Goodhue County Court Administration, received the MACM 2014 Early Career Excellence Award for her achievement with outstanding leadership and knowledge in the field of court administration. She has worked for Goodhue County Court Administration for 8 years. Vanessa started her career with the courts as a Court Collector and Jury Manager. The following year she worked as a Senior Court Clerk in the Family and Civil Divisions. Within 2 years of starting with the courts she became a Court Operations Supervisor over the Criminal/

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MACM Awards (Continued from page 6)

Traffic/Juvenile Divisions. Four years later she became Court Operations Supervisor over the Civil/Family/Collections Divisions. Before starting with Goodhue County District Court, she developed a legal background by working as a legal assistant at a law firm for 12 years. Vanessa has done an excellent job throughout her career with the Judicial Branch. In Goodhue County, she has worked in every division, has been a site lead to many eCourtMN implementation initiatives, was a leader in the transition to a paperless environment, she is very savvy with technology and computer programs, and is very enthusiastic about learning. Vanessa has completed the Management EDGE training and Tier I of the Institute for Court Management

Program, as well as numerous other trainings. She is presently taking Tier II education classes. Vanessa is described as extremely knowledgeable about court operations, flexible and innovative, always positive, goes above and beyond in everything she does, and someone who has already proven herself to be an effective leader in court administration.

“Court and government employees often do not receive recognition for their service and achievements. These individuals have gone above and beyond to improve operations and/or coach someone for the benefit of the Minnesota Judicial Branch and the public we serve. Through their dedication to public service and commitment to the court system, we all benefit,” said MACM Past President,

Vicky Carlson.

The Minnesota Association for Court Management has approximately 300 members throughout the Minnesota Judicial Branch. MACM is committed to the enrichment of its members through professional growth and development opportunities, promoting advancements and innovation in court administration, and partnering with other professionals working to improve the justice system in Minnesota.



New Policy Ensures Electronic Device Use in Court Facilities for Litigants

The Minnesota Judicial Council has promulgated a new policy “Electronic Devices in Courtrooms and Hearing Rooms” that was effective on October 1, 2014. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that attorneys and self-represented litigants are

permitted to use electronic devices in courtrooms and hearing rooms to assist with calendar issues and other case processing matters. In addition, the Council instructed each judicial district to promulgate a local policy addressing the use of electronic

devices by other court participants and by court visitors.

The First Judicial District already has such a policy, which defines a “court facility” as the entire portion of a building used for court

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New Policy (Continued from page 7)

operations (courtrooms, court administration offices, other locations used for court functions, and any adjacent common areas). With the exception of cell phones, electronic tablets, and laptop computers, any device capable of taking photos or recording video and audio is not permitted in a First District court facility

except as provided by court rule.

However, these devices can be used in common areas (waiting areas and jury assembly rooms) for very limited purposes and in “silent” mode only.

In order to enforce this First District policy, law enforcement and court personnel are authorized to search persons and inspect electronic devices in

a court facility. If evidence is found that they have been used in a manner not in compliance with the policy, the device may be seized and the individual violating the policy may be held in contempt of court.

The First District policy is located on our public website under [Administrative Orders and Policies](#).

Rules Committees Confronting eFiling and eService Challenges

Seven rules advisory committees are currently working on proposed amendments to Minnesota’s procedural court rules to achieve a smooth transition to mandatory electric filing (eFiling) and service (eService). The Minnesota Supreme Court reconstituted the committees in July, and each committee’s set of proposed amendments is due to the Court by December 31, 2014.

eFiling and eService is currently only mandated for attorneys and government agencies in specified civil and family case types in the 11 eCourtMN pilot counties (Cass, Clay, Cook, Dakota, Faribault,

Hennepin, Kandiyohi, Lake, Morrison, Ramsey and Washington). The eCourtMN Steering Committee, however, recently voted to expand the mandate to include all case types, and it is expected to go into effect July 1, 2015, in the 11 pilot counties. The mandate will eventually expand statewide following a period of voluntary eFiling and eService in Minnesota’s remaining 76 counties.

The advisory committee members include judges, lawyers, court administrators, and other legal professionals from across Minnesota. With the assistance of the State

Court Administrator’s Office, each committee will prepare proposed rule amendments for the Supreme Court’s consideration. The committees will draw on the experience of court personnel, attorneys, and other individuals familiar with using the eFiling and eService system in the eCourtMN pilot counties. They will also review the electronic filing rules of other states and the federal courts for additional perspectives on the issues.

The committees have tentatively scheduled a total of 32 meetings at the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul.

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Rules Committees (Continued from page 8)

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATES
General Rules of Practice	August 28 September 24 October 30 November 20 December 15
Rules of Public Access	September 16 October 14 October 29 November 13 December 9
Rules of Civil Procedure	September 12 October 10 November 14 December 12
Rules of Juvenile Protection and Adoption Procedure	September 10 October 15 October 28 November 18 December 11
Rules of Criminal Procedure	September 26 October 10 November 14 December 12
Rules of Juvenile Delinquency Procedure	September 19 October 24 November 21 December 19
Commitment and Treatment Act Rules	September 10 September 25 October 9 November 6 December 12

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