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Delaware County set to launch electronic filing for civil court cases

Enhanced automated system will improve information access and reduce government costs

Delaware County Council approved a contract Tuesday, March 29, that will introduce electronic filing to the civil section of the Court of Common Pleas, greatly enhancing access and case management capabilities while reducing government costs for civil filings.

Council approved a \$750,000 contract with AmCad, a Virginia-based company that specializes in integrated case management systems.

Once installed, the system will enable the Office of Judicial Support and the Court Administrator's Office to transition from a paper file to an electronic document management system. This modernization of the system will enhance Internet electronic information and services for those involved in civil-related matters such as contract disputes, personal injury cases, divorce and landlord/tenant matters, to name only a few.

The e-system does not include Domestic Relations or support cases.

To date, seven of the 67 counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have upgraded their court systems to allow for e-filing in civil matters. Pending the County solicitor's approval and contract finalization, the implementation process will take about 15 months.

"Electronic filing of court documents greatly improves the efficiency and accuracy of the data as filings move from the attorneys and parties involved, through the OJS and Court Administration offices, to the Court and finally to a resolution," said County Council Vice Chairman Christine Fizzano Cannon. "This use of technology will really improve the process for all parties."

The new e-filing system will provide case management tracking and scheduling, updating the County's current civil and arbitration case management. The automated system is expected to reduce costs of the County's case notification process.

The system will also improve reporting and data accessing capabilities and will support the complex docketing and calendaring needs of the court.

Court Administrator Gerald Montella said the Delaware County Bar Association has formed a committee to assist with implementation of the e-filing system.

He said the electronic system will reduce postage costs, reduce staff time for pulling records, eliminate duplicate data entry, provide for improved fiscal analysis, reduce the storage space needed for paper files, and provide better access to records for all parties.

Attorneys and individuals simply need Internet access to use the new system. They don't need any special programs and there will be a tutorial to assist them.

People without Internet access can still come into the Courthouse and Government Center to complete filings electronically.

In 2010, Delaware County implemented an e-Pay system that allows defendants to make court payments via the Internet with a credit or debit cards. The e-Pay option is another way that use of technology provides residents with greater convenience in making payments for court fines, costs and restitution.



E-Filing for civil court documents

Caption: Delaware County Council Vice-Chair Christine Fizzano Cannon (center) announced that the County will introduce electronic filing to the civil section of the Court of Common Pleas, replacing the hefty docket books and stacks of files shown here in the County Office of Judicial Support (OJS). The e-filing system was announced jointly on Tuesday, March 29, by (from left) OJS Director Angela Martinez, Information Technology Director Jerry O'Connor, Fizzano Cannon, Court Administrator Gerald C. Montella, and Jeanne Ross, system liaison for the executive director. The e-filing system will take about 15 months to be fully implemented.