

Location Overview

Stearns County is located in central Minnesota, home to about 150,000 residents. Stearns County has implemented Court Integration Services to comply with state requirements, to improve our judicial processes and better serve their residents.

Attorney Case Management

The Stearns County Attorney has a Case Management System called LENS. The county has implemented Court Integration Services to aid in the eFiling of cases in the Minnesota Court Information System, (MNCIS) using the BCA's eCharging system. Criminal cases originating as citations and criminal complaints are filed in this manner.

Integrated eFiling Services

LENS periodically checks eCharging for new incidents and citations. When new ones are found, it electronically creates cases in LENS using data pulled from eCharging which includes attached reports, associated parties, charges and offense information.

When complaints filed through eCharging are accepted in MNCIS, LENS downloads the signed complaint and the court file number. The complaint gets attached to the MNCIS court case and the court file number is used to update the case.

Case Notification Services

LENS updates its cases and other information using several case notifications, including Hearing Trial Setting, Subject Party, and Court Decision.

Hearing Trial Setting

As hearings are created and updated in MNCIS, Hearing Trial Setting notifications are sent to LENS. LENS uses these case notifications to update its calendar. LENS also updates Microsoft Outlook calendar entries for each of the attorneys involved as well as [the public case web site](#).

Subject Party

When associated parties are changed in MNCIS, Subject Party notifications are sent to LENS. The system uses this information to identify and update the attorney and attorney office handling a case.

Court Decision

As court decisions are updated in MNCIS, LENS receives the Court Decision notifications. It uses this information to update case outcome information on LENS.

Benefits of Integration

Stearns County has experienced many benefits through the use of these integrations. The Stearns County Attorney's Office began consuming electronic notifications in 2008. This has allowed the office to have a completely electronic court calendar for hearings associated with cases in our case management system.

- a) Receiving hearing notifications electronically saves about two hours a day in calendar management. Receiving electronically eliminates the need to manually create calendar events in a case management system or Outlook calendar as well as the filing of paper notifications in each physical file.
- b) Receiving the notifications electronically allows our office to begin using that information almost immediately. Electronic notifications are received throughout the day as modifications are made to calendar events. We no longer have the delay associated with the production and handling of the paper notices as well as the delay associated with processing those paper notices within our office.
- c) Electronic notifications are more reliable than paper notices. The instances of missing a paper notice were more frequent than any issues experienced with the electronic notifications. Also, by consuming notice information electronically, there is no opportunity for human error associated with our staff entering those events in our case management system or calendar.
- d) Overall, even without the resource savings associated with electronic court notices, electronic notices allow our office to have a more complete, accurate, and up-to-date calendar. Our office looks forward to reaping these same benefits with other electronic notifications as they become available from court.