



**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

VOLUME 6—ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2015

## Audio and Video Upgrades in Carver County Courtrooms

Carver County Commissioners recently approved audio and video upgrades to the courtrooms in Chaska. The existing audio was original equipment from the 1994 construction of the Carver County Justice Center and had



been malfunctioning.

The upgrades were completed in September 2014, and included upgraded audio, a speaker at each participant location, an expanded audio rack, and equipped the courtrooms with video

technology for trials.

Judge Michael Wentzell commented, “[s]implistic as it may sound, the most fundamental way for all parties to receive a full and fair hearing, is for all parties to be heard - by the judge, jurors, parties, and court reporter. Numerous jurors have commented on the quality of the sound and the presentation of visual evidence made possible through these technological upgrades. On behalf of the judges, we appreciate the foresight of the Carver County Board of Commissioners in acting on this very important issue.”

In addition to the excellent sound system, two courtrooms were equipped with laptop and HDMI connectors. Once connected, attorneys can project the image from their laptop or other device directly to the 70” courtroom monitor. “Prior to the upgrades, court

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Audio/Video Upgrades (Continued from page 1)

staff had to wheel in an oversized, heavy technology cart. Those units are cumbersome and don't always connect with ease," said Vicky Carlson, Carver County Court Administrator.

The upgraded system is controlled within each courtroom via Crestron units. These devices are located at the clerk and judge locations, and control all of the sound and video technology in the courtroom. Each courtroom is also equipped with two wireless microphones and devices for the hearing

impaired.

Assistant County Attorney, Peter Ivy, stated, "Over the years, I have tried a number of jury trials to conclusion. Prior to the new courtroom technology, I would formerly fumble with cords, cabling, carts, accessory speakers, screens and noisy projectors. In a recent trial, I enjoyed the seamless and elegant simplicity of superlative audio and video capabilities in the courtroom. Both the video monitor and sound system were crystal clear, proving a significant boon in my

presentation (of course, the same capabilities are available to defense counsel). So too, I was able to dispense with the clutter of auxiliary equipment to better concentrate on the legal and factual theories of my case."

This is another example of how Carver County and the courts are using technology to better serve the citizens of Minnesota.

Carver County District Court processes over 10,000 cases annually and has four chambered judges. The county seat is located in Chaska.

## Judicial Branch Brings Important Funding Request to the Capitol

As the Minnesota Judicial Branch embarks on a transformational year that will see the transition to electronic court records implemented across the state, judicial leaders are seeking an increase in state funding that will allow the Branch to retain and attract the type of skilled-knowledge workers necessary to maintain and operate a modern, efficient, and technology-based court system.



According to Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea, the budget request is necessary to "maintain the

caliber of workforce necessary to continue driving innovation within the court system," while "easing the financial

**In total, the Judicial Branch is seeking a 7.5% increase in state funding, with the additional funding directed to three major areas**

- Providing compensation increases to Judicial Branch staff and judges. The increases follow a five-year pay freeze at the Judicial Branch, which has left the Judicial Branch's salary structure uncompetitive with other public sector employers.
- Restoring recent cuts to juror per diem that were made during difficult budget shortfalls, and increasing the long-frozen mileage reimbursement paid to jurors.
- Holding court operations harmless from unavoidable insurance cost increases for judges and employees.

burden placed on Minnesota citizens who make a sacrifice by honoring their duty of citizenship to report for jury duty."  
Chief Justice  
*(Continued on page 3)*

Judicial Branch Funding Request (continued from page 2)

Gildea and staff from the State Court Administrator's Office have already begun

meeting with legislative leadership and key committee chairs to detail the Branch's

budget request. Many more meetings are planned in the months ahead.

Minnesota's two largest papers - the *Star Tribune* and *Pioneer Press* - have both run editorials praising the Judicial Branch's ambitious innovation agenda. The *Star Tribune* Editorial Board also wrote in support of the Branch's budget request, as well as support for new funding for an expansion of drug courts.

The *Star Tribune*: [Courts make strong case for more state funds](#)

The *Pioneer Press*: [Minnesota: State judiciary adapts to the times: Pioneer Press editorial](#)

## Vicky Carlson Elected to NACM Board of Directors

Vicky Carlson, Carver County Court Administrator was elected Secretary/Treasurer for the National Association for Court Management (NACM) in July 2014. She was previously elected to the NACM Board in 2011 as the General Jurisdiction Director. NACM is the largest organization of court management professionals in the world with members from all levels and types of courts.



Vicky Carlson, Carver County Court Administrator

Ms. Carlson has served as the Court Administrator in Carver County, Minnesota, since 2007 where she manages the day-to-

day operations of the court. Prior to serving in Carver County, she was a Court Administrative Manager in Dakota County District Court, where she managed the collections and accounting divisions as well as special projects and technology implementations.

Ms. Carlson attended

Metro State University and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration. She is a Fellow of the National Center for State Courts, Institute for Court

Management (2011) where she completed a research paper on Remote Language Interpreting in the Minnesota Trial Courts. She is also Past-President of the Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM).

Judge Kevin Burke from the Fourth Judicial District was also elected Judge Director on the NACM Board in 2014.



NACM Board of Directors for 2014-2015



## Technology Innovations in the Appellate Courts

By AnnMarie S. O’Neill, Clerk of Appellate Courts

The Minnesota Supreme Court, Minnesota Court of Appeals, and the Clerk of the Appellate Courts’ Office have reached a significant milestone in their efforts toward eFiling and electronic records management. After nearly two-years of design, development and testing, the appellate courts launched an eFiling pilot project on October 1, 2014.

Appellate eFiling, also known as E-MACS, is an extension of the existing appellate case management system (MACS). Phase 1 of the pilot involved eFiling for criminal appeals in Ramsey County where the State Public Defender’s Office represented the appellant. Additionally, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) began eFiling administrative records for unemployment appeals. In January 2015, the pilot will be expanded to include criminal appeals from Hennepin County and administrative records from other executive branch agencies. eFiling for private attorneys is expected to begin in early spring 2015, with the rollout completed in 2015.

Appellate eFiling offers the benefits of 24/7 filing along with instant confirmation of receipt by the appellate courts and the ability to pay filing fees with a credit card.

In preparation for eFiling, staff members in the Clerk of the Appellate Courts’ Office began imaging all incoming mail in December 2013. As a result, the 2014 appellate files are entirely electronic, creating a user-friendly way for justices, judges, staff attorneys and law clerks to navigate appellate records. A third document security level, “Courthouse View,” was also added to the existing confidential and public settings. Most publicly accessible incoming documents are set to “Courthouse View” and are available at a terminal in the State Law Library. Orders, opinions and other “outgoing” appellate documents continue to be remotely accessible on the P-MACS website.

### Appellate Document Security Levels and Accessibility



Document Security Type	Accessibility
Public/Remote Access (outgoing documents)	P-MACS Website <a href="http://macsnc.courts.state.mn.us/ctrack/publicLogin.jsp">http://macsnc.courts.state.mn.us/ctrack/publicLogin.jsp</a>
Courthouse View (publicly available incoming documents)	State Law Library Terminal Ground Floor – Minnesota Judicial Center
Court Use Only (non-publicly available documents)	Clerk of the Appellate Courts’ Office – Parties to the Case Only

The appellate courts also worked with the eFile Support Center to have an appellate court assistance option added to the call menu. By the end of the year, members of the public will be able to contact the eFile Support Center (651-227-2002) and be routed to the Clerk of the Appellate Courts’ Office for assistance with appellate eFiling.

Lastly, MNCIS users may have noticed the Register of Actions now includes a Document Index number in the far-right column for documents filed in district court on or after June 27, 2014 (see graphic example on page 5). This feature was added to MNCIS to assist appellate filers with citing to the district court record. The State Court Administrator’s Office Information Technology Division is working toward adding the Index number to documents filed prior to June 27, 2014, as well.

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Technology Innovations (Continued from page 4)

12/03/2014	 Request for Trial Court Record-Appellate Court		Index #83
11/18/2014	 Transcript <i>Contested Omnibus Hearing, 9/10/2014; Judge Zimmerman</i>		Index #81
11/18/2014	 Court Reporter Certificate of Filing & Delivery -Appellate Crt		Index #82

The appellate courts are excited about the technological advancements made during 2014 and eager to continue this growth in

2015! Any questions regarding appellate eFiling can be directed to AnnMarie S. O’Neill, Clerk of the Appellate Courts, at

[annmarie.o'neill@courts.state.mn.us](mailto:annmarie.o'neill@courts.state.mn.us) or (651) 297-5529.

## Judge Janet Cain Inducted into Burnsville High School Hall of Fame



On September 5, 2014, First District Judge Janet Cain joined an elite group when she was inducted into the Burnsville High School (BHS) Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame Class of 2014

represented a tremendous breadth of success achieved by members of the BHS community both at the school and beyond. Including leaders in their professional fields, standout student athletes, a decorated coach and a championship team, the newest Hall of Fame class was inducted at a public ceremony held in the school’s Mraz Center for Performing Arts.

New inductees were graduates Jim Banke, Janet Cain, James Campbell, Denise Johnson Hennen and Lance Werness, retired teacher/coach Neal Jeppson, and the 1972 Minnesota state champion football team. They joined 60 previously inducted honorees, including First District Judge David Knutson.

“The Hall of Fame honorees serve as an example of the quality education that BHS provides and has fostered over the years and as role models for current students and staff to achieve their own success,” according to Dave Helke, principal.

The BHS Hall of Fame was established in 2006 as part of the school’s 50th anniversary celebration as a way to recognize those who have made exceptional achievements in their field, significant contributions to Burnsville High School, and unique contributions to their community on a local, state, national or international level.

Judge Cain is a 1982 BHS graduate,

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*Judge Janet Cain (Continued from page 5)*

presently serving as a judge in the First Judicial District. She attended the University of Minnesota, where she graduated in May 1986 with a business degree from the Carlson School of Management and was recognized on the Dean's List. She attended Hamline University School of Law where she graduated Cum Laude in 1986. Cain was a Merit Scholarship recipient, was on the National Dean's Honor Roll and received the American Jurisprudence Award in Evidence and Litigation Practice. She also served as associate articles editor of the Law Review in 1987-88 and editor in 1988-89.

Cain was responsible for all aspects of criminal prosecution as well as the necessary legal research and paperwork associated with courtroom appearances as an assistant city attorney in the Criminal Division of the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office from 1992-94. She then moved to the Carver County Attorney's Office where she served as assistant county attorney in the Criminal Division from 1994-96 and the Civil Division in 1996. She became the Juvenile Division Head in 1996, a position she held until

2008. There Cain was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Division including supervision, case management and policy and procedure development and implementation for juvenile delinquency and child protection matters. She was responsible for training local law enforcement, social services employees and other county agencies on a variety of juvenile, criminal and civil issues.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty appointed Cain as a First Judicial District Court Judge in 2007. She is responsible for handling all types of calendars in the district including Criminal, Family, Juvenile Delinquency, Children in Need of Protection or Services and Conciliation Court. She is also the presiding Judge for the first Veteran's Court in the First Judicial District. She serves as the lead judge for the State of Minnesota Children's Justice Initiative Carver County CHIPS Mediation Pilot Project and is responsible for implementing Early Neutral Evaluation in Carver Courts. Cain also serves on the Minnesota Supreme Court Juvenile Protection Rules Committee, the Minnesota District Judges Association Board of Directors, and formerly the

Minnesota Tribal Courts/State Court Committee.

Judge Cain is active in the Burnsville community volunteering with the Vista View Elementary PTO, Nicollet Junior High and Burnsville High School activities, serving on the District 191 Community Education Advisory Council, and volunteering with the Burnsville Athletic Club.



## Sibley County Completes eCharging Implementation

By Brian E. Jones, Assistant District Administrator

On December 11, 2014, Sibley County went live on “eCharging” becoming one of the last jurisdictions in the First Judicial District to implement this new integrated system.

eCharging is a joint effort between the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), Minnesota Judicial Branch, law enforcement, and prosecutors related to charging documents for all felony, gross misdemeanor, statutory misdemeanor, and local ordinance cases. It permits the prosecutor to generate and sign an electronic criminal complaint, route it to law enforcement for review and the officer’s electronic signature, then get it to the judge for the probable cause review and electronic signature, and finally electronically file the complaint with the court.

Historically, the criminal charging process involved a variety of records management systems, which required duplicate data entry as information was amended or updated. The systems were usually not designed to pass information and documents to other systems and no system could pass authorizations and approvals such as an electronic signature. This generated paper documents that were

sometimes faxed or hand delivered and re-entered into another agency’s system. In worst situations, paper documents were physically transported by police officers. Similar data duplication and re-entry problems existed with DWI arrest forms.

This outdated process led to a lot of unnecessary travel, paper, legwork, and duplicate data entry, with resulting lost efficiency, data accuracy and data links that wasted physical and human resources. The data accuracy and data integration problems also created public safety risks as key pieces of information were “lost” inside the system, not accessible by those who needed them to make decisions about whether a subject passed a background check, or to those making sentencing decisions based on the subject’s prior criminal history.

The solution is an integrated eCharging system, created and paid for by the BCA that serves as a “broker” between individual data systems. It passes incident reports, complaints, citations, and DWI administrative forms, including the underlying data and signatures, between law enforcement, prosecutors, state executive branch

agencies, and the courts. The system:

- Reduces or eliminates re-entry of criminal justice data
- Reduces or eliminates costs to transport documents between agencies and lost time for officers and court personnel
- Creates greater accuracy in incident and charging data
- Uses innovative electronic signature methods
- Allows agencies to track a document’s activity as it moves through the system, sending notifications when a prosecutor, officer, or judge has signed a complaint
- Integrates with each agency’s records management system
- Creates a criminal complaint within the eCharging system
- Integrates with state court electronic filing services
- Eliminates the need to print documents for signatures and provides a service in a secure environment, fully compliant with data practices laws and Minnesota Court Rules

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*Sibley County eCharging (Continued from page 7)*

- Determines appropriate DWI form set using short question list and prior offenses located using interface with state vehicle records system
- DWI form computes revocation and plate impound dates based on data sets
- Integrates breath test results into the DWI form set (blood and urine tests will also be sent to eCharging soon)

The net result is improved public safety due to more accurate and complete criminal justice information and more efficient use of human and financial resources. In a period of time where all government agencies are focusing heavily on technology as a way to save resources, eCharging is one system that is resulting in significant time and money savings.

Statewide, there are 75 counties that are now live on eCharging, with seven more in the planning process and four that are discussing implementation of the new system.



**Sibley County Courthouse**

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