

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Justice of the Peace Court joins with Secretary of State's Office
to Improve Out-of-State Process Service**

The Justice of the Peace Court is proud to announce it has implemented an innovative agreement with the Delaware Secretary of State's Office to eliminate a significant and serious choke point in the serving of civil court papers.

The solution involved using an existing electronic service system, established by the Secretary of State's office, meaning no additional money had to be spent on the new process that is saving hundreds of hours of staff time. It is the perfect example of the kind of process improvement that the Judicial Branch has been focused on to ensure that Delaware Courts are spending taxpayer dollars wisely by operating in the most efficient manner possible.

"The Justice of the Peace Court is pleased to be able to offer this new, modern process for service on out-of-state defendants and that this improved process was achieved without any significant burden on taxpayers and will in fact save money in the long run. The Justice of the Peace Court has always been a 'process improvement' organization, but this example of our innovative resourcefulness comes with an outstanding partner and can be a model for our future efforts," said Chief Magistrate Alan G. Davis.

Previously, serving court papers on out-of-state companies in civil cases involving debts or wage garnishments had to be accomplished through a complicated, multi-layered process that was burdensome to the court's filers as well as court staff. The old process involved the manual filing of papers and checks with the Court and the transport of hard copies of paperwork between civil court locations, several duplicative steps for court clerks, and the need for a Constable to hand deliver materials on a regular basis to the Secretary of State's Office. As with any process that involves shuttling papers from one location to another, there was always a potential risk of documents getting lost, misplaced, or misfiled.

The Justice of the Peace Court, however, was able to partner with the Secretary of State's Office to expand an in-house system used by the Division of Corporations that allows individuals to file legal documents with the Court for service on the Secretary of State. By obtaining access to this paperless, electronic system, the Justice of the Peace Court will now be able to directly file these documents – easing the burden on both Court staff and filers. The new process eliminates the need to physically move paperwork from one place to another, and entirely eliminates the need for Constables in the process and makes it possible for filers to electronically file their paperwork with the Court and make a single electronic payment in place of writing a physical check.

“Our Division of Corporations is known the world over for its efficiency in processing business filings and the outstanding customer service of our team,” said Secretary of State Jeff Bullock. “We’ve been able to partner with the Chief Magistrate to make things run smoother for Justice of the Peace Court across the state, staff and the citizens they serve.”

Finally, this new process has been incorporated into the current Justice of the Peace Court’s e-filing system which can be easily integrated into a statewide e-filing system.

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