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FIRST PHASE OF NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED

The first phase of implementation of a new case management system for the Delaware courts was completed on November 1 with the successful initiation of civil case management functions in three Justice of the Peace Courts - Courts 17 and 19 in Sussex County and Court 12 in New Castle County. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of team members from all the courts, the first phase of implementation went smoothly and the Justice of the Peace Court staff was able to make the transition to the new system with minimal disruption. Chief Magistrate Alan Davis complimented his court staff. "They should be congratulated for their dedicated efforts in training and their willingness to be a part of these pioneering steps in the COTS project."

The new system known as COTS (Courts Organized to Serve) is expected to be one of the most comprehensive case management systems in the country. When fully implemented, it will provide for web and telephone access to provide better service

to court customers; e-filing will be available in all courts; document imaging will make access to case records easier; and enhanced interfaces will provide timely information to the courts' justice partners. In addition, the courts have been working to streamline their processes and develop greater uniformity of practice across courts. "Everyone involved has consistently placed the need to better serve the citizens of our state ahead of individual court needs," said Chief Justice Myron T. Steele.

Phase 2, expected in the spring of 2007, will extend civil implementation to the remaining Justice of the Peace Civil Courts. Subsequent phases bring the new case management system for civil case processing to other courts and add criminal case processing and related interfaces. Additional components improving functionality will come with each phase.

Most system functionality will be in place by 2009 with full implementation expected in 2010. However, the November 1 implementation of the first phase was a significant accomplish-

ment in that the technological infrastructure for the project is now in place and operational. "This first implementation is but one of many milestones to come," said Chief Justice Steele. "I have no doubt that the spirit of cooperation and dedication exhibited to date will serve us well as we go forward."

The court system has been assisted in this effort by partner agencies, which have provided support and expertise. The project has been funded by the Delaware General Assembly and supplemented by federal funds.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT 12 on the first day of COTS implementation—relatively smooth operations resulted from hard work by the JP Court staff, with extra help from members of the COTS team.



INNS OF COURT ASSIST PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF MEMBERS OF THE BENCH AND BAR

Members of the Terry-Carey Inn of Court, including approximately 25 Delaware judges, attorneys, and family members traveled to England in October to attend the historic first meeting of the London American Inn of Court and to learn more about the English system of law which is the foundation of our legal system. The London American Inn of Court was chartered as the 400th American Inn of Court in April 2006 and held its initial meeting on October 10, 2006. A dinner meeting was held at the Old Hall of Lincoln's Inn at which Justice Randy J. Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court presented a program with an English colleague about the boundary disputes between the Penn and Baltimore families which affected Delaware's borders. The group also had the opportunity to attend daily educational sessions pertaining to English law and the international importance of London as a financial and legal center, to attend court in the Royal Courts of Justice, to visit Parliament, to observe a Law Lord proceeding (equivalent to a U.S. Supreme Court proceeding), and to meet and discuss legal subjects with Law Lords. Another major highlight was a trip to Canterbury where they visited the law courts, had a reception with English judges, barristers, and solicitors, and participated in a traditional Justice Service at Canterbury Cathedral to mark the opening terms of the Kent Courts. The High Sheriff hosted a lunch, and the group had the opportunity to tour the Cathedral and to visit a law school.

Judge Richard F. Stokes, president of the Terry-Carey Inn, expressed his gratitude to Chief Justice Myron T. Steele and Justice Randy J. Holland for "giving us a once in a lifetime legal experience."

The trip was part of the educational program of the Terry-Carey Inn of Court, which is one of five American Inns of Court in Delaware. The other Delaware Inns of Court are: the Delaware Bankruptcy American Inn of Court, the Delaware Pro Bono American Inn of Court, the Melson-Arsht American Inn of Court (which specializes in Family law), and the Richard S. Rodney American Inn of Court.

The Inns are designed to enhance the skills, professionalism and ethics of judges and attorneys and have adopted a modified version of the traditional English model of legal apprenticeship, to help lawyers become more effective advocates and counselors. Inns meet approximately once a month to hold programs and discussions designed to augment members' skills and ethical awareness. The membership of each Inn consists of several categories based upon experience: Masters of the Bench – judges, experienced lawyers, and law professors; Barristers – lawyers with some experience who do not meet the minimum requirement for Master; Associates – lawyers who do not meet the minimum requirement for Barristers; and Pupils – third-year law students. Memberships are also divided into "pupilage" teams with each team consisting of members with different degrees of legal experience. Each "pupilage" team conducts one program for the Inn each year. Less experienced members are assigned to work with more experienced members who act as mentors, thus providing further opportunities for professional growth.



Delaware Judges from the Terry-Carey Inn of Court, photographed with their counterparts in Canterbury, England, at the ceremony to mark the opening terms of the Kent Courts, England.

DELAWARE JUDICIARY RECOGNIZED

The Delaware judiciary is proud of the accomplishments of its members, not only for their outstanding day to day work as judges and commissioners, but also for the recognition that they receive from outside organizations. Congratulations are offered to the following judges and commissioners who received recognition recently:

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele and Vice Chancellor Leo E. Strine, Jr. were named among the 500 leading lawyers in the country in the Fall 2006 Edition of the Lawdragon Top 500 Lawyers in America.

Vice Chancellor Leo E. Strine, Jr. (Court of Chancery) was named a Henry Crown Fellow by the Aspen Institute. As such, he is one of 20 young executives and professionals who will participate in a series of leadership development sessions over a two year period. Fellows are nominated for their potential to provide leadership at the highest levels of civic or corporate responsibility.

Resident Judge T. Henley Graves (Superior Court) was recognized by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services at its Summer Institute on July 24, 2006 for "judiciary leadership and commitment to drug courts."

Judge William C. Carpenter (Superior Court) was elected for a two year term to the Executive Committee of the National Conference of State Trial Judges (NCSTJ) which is a conference of the Judicial Division of the American Bar Association. Judge Carpenter was also appointed to serve this year as chairman of the American Bar Association's Judicial Division Membership Committee.

Judge Joseph R. Slights III (Superior Court) was awarded the Distinguished Mentoring Award by the Delaware State Bar Association. This award recognizes a Delaware lawyer or judge who, by mentoring, has served as an inspiration and model.

Resident Judge William L. Witham Jr. (Superior Court) was the featured speaker at Liberty University School of Law's Center for Career and Professional Development Program on September 19, 2006.

Judge M. Jane Brady (Superior Court) was one of five leaders inducted into the Hall of Fame of Delaware Women on March 16, 2006. To date, 87 women representing a variety of fields have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn (Family Court) received the 2006 Albert Elias award for outstanding contributions to juvenile justice from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency on October 20, 2006. She was also honored as an inspiration to girls by Girls, Inc. of Delaware at its celebration luncheon on June 8, 2006 and received a Wilmington Award for her work with youth from the City of Wilmington on October 4, 2006.

Judge Aida Wasserstein (Family Court) was awarded the John H. Mathis Trailblazer Award at the 7th Annual Partners for Progress Summit on August 10, 2006. The award is given annually to an individual, community organization, state agency and/or business organization that has promoted appreciation of diversity and cultural understanding. Judge Wasserstein was chosen for her leadership role as chair of the Delaware Supreme Court's Certified Court Interpreter Program.

Judge Peter B. Jones (Family Court) was recognized for "Exemplary Pro Bono Publico Service" by the Delaware Supreme Court on June 6, 2006.

Commissioner Patricia Stewart (Family Court) received the Widener University School of Law Adjunct Faculty Distinguished Service Award for 2006.

Judge Joseph F. Flickinger III (Court of Common Pleas) was recognized by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services at its Summer Institute on July 24, 2006 for his role in establishing mental health courts.

CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE'S REMARKS AT A NATIONAL CONFERENCE: "FIRST STATE FIRST RATE"

What makes the First State First Rate: A view from the Delaware Supreme Court was the topic of a speech given by Chief Justice Myron T. Steele, the featured speaker at a conference held by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Legal Reform and the National Chamber Foundation in Washington, D.C. on July 18, 2006. Distinguished attendees included United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts.

In his speech, Chief Justice Steele identified several factors that work to make Delaware's court system first rate. Foremost among these, he indicated, is the exceptional quality of its judges. This is the result not only of having a sophisticated legal community from which to draw, but also the result of a selection process which is merit based and as politically neutral as possible. In addition, he noted, there is a concerted effort to attract and retain high quality judges by providing rational compensation and opportunities for professional growth through statewide collegiality, as well as outside

continuing legal education and interaction with peers on a national basis.

Chief Justice Steele also stressed that the Delaware courts think of themselves as businesses that need to provide quality service to their customers. Finally, the Chief Justice pointed to the strong relationship the Judicial Branch has built with the other branches of state government and the ensuing commitment of the General Assembly and the Governor to providing the necessary resources to maintain the excellence of the Delaware Judicial Branch, including keeping it at the forefront in technology.

The one-day conference was designed to examine the current condition of the judiciary in the United States. Delaware courts were viewed as a role model, as the Institute for Legal Reform has long recognized the success of the Delaware courts, having ranked the Delaware courts first in the nation for the fifth year in a row.



Chief Justice Steele, United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, and Chief Justice Steele's law clerks, Vincent Thomas and Patrick Karsnitz, after Chief Justice Steele's remarks at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce conference.

DELAWARE SUPERIOR COURT SELECTED FOR STUDY CONCERNING EXPERT WITNESSES

The Delaware Superior Court's handling of testimony by experts was the subject of a recently published study conducted by the National Center for State Courts. The study was designed primarily to explore ways in which recent case law concerning expert testimony adopted by the federal courts and nine states (including Delaware) has altered admission or exclusion of expert witness testimony and how it affects courts, judges, and litigants. Under

this case law, the standard for admitting expert testimony has been raised and the judge becomes a "gatekeeper", taking on a more active role in screening expert opinion before submitting it to the jury.

It had been feared by some that this greater scrutiny would result in excessive or unnecessary cost or delay. The study found, however, that this was not the result in Delaware Superior Court cases.

INSTALLATION OF NEW ARTWORK FOR THE NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

There is a new "commanding presence" on the New Castle County Courthouse (NCCCH) Plaza -- an imposing sculpture that is designed to celebrate the development of law from earliest times (Hammurabi Code, Greek and Roman Law) through modern days (the Bill of Rights and the United States Constitution). The 51 foot tall tower has an illuminated glass lantern at its core, a multicolored stainless steel framework, and bands of text containing legal themes from history extending around the central sculpture and throughout the seating areas. The lantern light, symbolizing the "light of justice," will be lit at the dedication ceremony on Monday, January 22, 2007.

This work of public art was created by renowned artist, Brower Hatcher, whose Mid-Ocean Studio is located in Providence, Rhode Island. Under the direction of Brower Hatcher, the Mid-Ocean Studio creative team includes artists, designers, fabricators, and technical personnel, who work in close collaboration with computer scientists, mathematicians, and engineers, to develop three-dimensional, matrix-based art that is "conceptual, humane, intimate, and mythic."

During Brower Hatcher's career, spanning close to thirty years, he has created many major works of art for public sites. The New Castle County Courthouse, through the work of the NCCCH Art Committee, is fortunate to serve as home to this significant and inspirational display of art. In addition to the Brower Hatcher sculpture, the NCCCH Art Committee recently received a donation of six abstract impressionist paintings by Daniel K. Teis. These colorful paintings greatly enhance the public space in several locations in the NCCCH.



The Brower Hatcher sculpture under construction on the New Castle County Courthouse Plaza—November 13-17, 2006

JUSTICE HOLLAND SERVES AS GROUP LEADER AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAIR AND INDEPENDENT COURTS

Justice Randy J. Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court served as a working group leader at a national conference entitled "Fair and Independent Courts: A Conference on the State of the Judiciary" held at Georgetown University Law Center on September 28-29, 2006. The Conference, which was co-chaired by retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and current Justice Stephen Breyer, was an invitation only event which drew over 250 legal and business luminaries such as U.S. Supreme Court Justices Samuel Alito, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, and Clarence Thomas, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, Berkshire Hathaway Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Warren Buffet, and Washington Post Company Chairman and CEO Don Graham.

The conference was designed to address growing concerns about the preservation of federal and state courts' tradition of independence. The organizers of the conference noted concerns relating to attacks on the independence of the courts as seen

in partisan confirmation battles, calls for impeachment or recall following unpopular decisions, and public opinion polls revealing resentment of "judicial activism".

Expressing concerns about such attacks, Chief Justice Roberts noted that, although judicial independence "is not immunity from criticism, it should not degenerate into attack on individual judges for [a] decision as a means of intimidation, and it should not take the form of institutional retribution – action against the judiciary as a whole – that might inhibit the judges from performing their vital function."

Working groups, such as that led by Justice Holland, were a crucial part of the conference as participants were responsible for developing a list of solutions for ensuring that the judicial system remains fair and independent. The results of the various working groups will be compiled by the Law Center into formal recommendations for action.



Justice Randy J. Holland making remarks at a recent conference.

HELPING THE PUBLIC ACCESS THE NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

At 8:15 a.m. jurors begin entering the New Castle County Courthouse. Those who have not been called to jury duty since the courthouse at 500 North King Street opened in October 2002 often approach the information desk in search of assistance. The information desk, staffed by Administrative Office of the Court personnel, is a juror's initial point of contact with the court system and their friendly assistance lends a positive first note.

At 8:30 a.m., the general public begins navigating its way through the security process. At this hour of the

day, plaintiffs, defendants, attorneys, witnesses, and other interested parties are often looking for information that will ensure they arrive at the right place at the right time. Many of them approach the information desk too.

People come and go through the doors of the courthouse in the course of each day, with approximately 2,000 people visiting the courthouse daily. Records show that about one-half of all visitors ask for help at the information desk,

Continued on next page

which is located just beyond the security stations. The new courthouse was designed to include an easily accessible information desk as a way to improve how the courts serve the public, and it works! The staff is readily accessible, well trained, and responsive to the needs of jurors, attorneys, and the general public.

The Court Roaming Information System (CRIS) is one of the tools available to information desk staff. It was created by the Judicial Information Center to allow the user to search court events scheduled for that day to determine when and where a person is scheduled to appear. The information desk staff also has multiple resource books on hand to help them answer any questions they may be asked, including a directory of state and criminal justice agencies and phone books for all counties.

While the majority of people who come to the courthouse arrive for a scheduled event, other visitors want to use the self help center, pay a fine, obtain court records, or even ask a question unrelated to the courts. According to Mary Ann Hillis, who supervises information desk operations, "Questions routinely begin with 'How do I' and 'Where do I,' and answering those questions enables the staff to meet the needs of the visitors while providing support services for the New Castle County Courthouse."

The contributions of the information desk staff extend to the self help center, where they work along with Family Court staff, to provide information to self-represented litigants. No matter what information the visitor needs the information desk staff does its best to help in whatever way it can.

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JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT FOCUSES ON PROFESSIONALISM

When the Justice of the Peace (JP) Court celebrated its 40th Anniversary this November, it also celebrated 10 years of the Court's Legal Education Program. The Legal Education Program prepares and trains justices of the peace for their role as judges. It consists of an introductory program for new judges as well as continuing education for current judges.

The Program begins with an intensive 11-week training program, called the Basic Legal Education

Program or BLE. This program gives new judges background in the legal concepts they will need on the bench. The program consists of a criminal module and a civil module. Each module includes mock trials, observation of current cases and trials in JP Court, and classes taught by currently sitting judges. At the end of each module is a written exam.

According to one recent participant in the program, it prepares new judges extremely well. "BLE was a



Justice Randy J. Holland, Carl C. Danberg, Attorney General, Justice Joseph T. Walsh (retired), Chief Magistrate Alan G. Davis, and Judge William Hopkins at the Justice of the Peace Court's 40th Anniversary Celebration, which was part of a two-day educational program held in November 2006.

definite help; it gave us tools and it gave us insight into the new job we were taking on," said Judge Dwight Dillard. Judge Dillard was appointed in June of 2006 and, after completing the BLE program, began hearing cases in September. Prior to being appointed, Judge Dillard was a JP Court clerk. Judge Dillard said that because he had been a court clerk he was familiar with the terminology, but he still had a lot to learn during BLE.

After completing the BLE program, judges must complete continuing legal education requirements throughout their tenure on the bench. One such opportunity was a recent education conference, held November 13-14, 2006. During the conference, judges learned about new police tactics to

combat DUI and what the police and Division of Motor Vehicles were doing about aging drivers. There were seminars on ethics, constitutional law, and evidence. In addition, Chief Magistrate Alan Davis and Attorney General Carl Danberg spoke to the judges about issues particular to the Justice of the Peace Court.

One of the reasons for the JP Court's special focus on education is that many of its judges are not attorneys. Because they are not required to be attorneys, judges come from varied backgrounds. Several, like Judge Dillard, are former court clerks. Judge John Martin served as Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. before coming to Delaware and Judge Stephani Adams worked with the Delaware Department of Family Services. As Judge Dillard mentioned, "each judge brings something different to the job...but we're all one big team."

The Justice of the Peace Court is often a citizen's first encounter with Delaware's court system. This is because the JP Court's jurisdiction includes warrants, DUIs, and civil claims up to \$15,000. They also have exclusive jurisdiction over landlord-tenant disputes. After a rigorous screening process, the Governor nominates JP judges for an initial four-year term. Subsequent terms are for six years. Currently there are 60 judges serving at 19 JP Courts throughout Delaware.

Judges Jeni Coffelt, John McKenzie, Marcealeate Ruffin and Edward Davis at the Justice of the Peace Court 40th Anniversary Dinner held on November 13, 2006, in conjunction with a BLE seminar.



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eFiling

EXPANDS IN THE SUPREME COURT

Delaware's lead in the use of technology to improve the management of litigation advanced with the implementation of the final phase of the Delaware Supreme Court's electronic filing (eFiling) initiative on December 4, 2006. This phase provides for the eFiling of all new criminal appeals from the Superior Court and all new appeals from the Family Court. With the implementation of this phase, all new appeals from the Court of Chancery, the Superior Court and the Family Court will be handled through eFiling. In order to assist users with the process of electronic filing, both live and online training has been made available free of charge.

The Supreme Court became the first appellate court in the nation to use e-filing to save time and money when it implemented the first phase of e-filing in October 2005. The Delaware Superior Court and the Court of Chancery have also been national leaders in the use of eFiling at the trial court level. The first electronic filing of court documents in the United States occurred fifteen years ago on December 9, 1991 in the Delaware Superior Court. Since then, in Delaware courts more than 17 million pages of documents have been filed or served electronically.

For further information, please contact Steve.Taylor@state.de.us

GUARDIANSHIPS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

While the Court of Chancery is known for its role in corporate litigation, it plays, perhaps, an even more important role – that of approving and overseeing adult guardianships. In fulfilling this essential function, it is greatly assisted by the Office of the Public Guardian.

When appointed by the Court of Chancery, the Office of the Public Guardian offers critical support for adults who are unable to manage their financial and/or personal affairs, have no family available to help them, and are unable to afford private guardianship services. Such support is tailored to the individual needs of each client and may include a wide variety of types of assistance from applying for Social Security and Medicaid to consenting and monitoring medical treatment, to making end of life decisions. The Court reviews each guardianship twice per year.

A good example of some of the types of assistance provided can be seen in the story of Mrs. Briggs (a pseudonym). Mrs. Briggs, who is now 85, was referred to the Office ten years ago by a friend of her late husband who recognized that she was no longer capable of managing her financial affairs and was living in a home in much disrepair. Having come to the United States with her husband from England many years previously to work as a butler and housekeeper for a businessman who sponsored them for permanent residency, Mrs. Briggs had no family available to provide assistance.

When staff of the Public Guardian first met her, Mrs. Briggs had some symptoms of memory impairment, but wished to remain in the community. Although her physician did not feel that she needed a personal guardian, he agreed that a guardianship of her property was necessary for her protection. After obtaining this guardianship, the Office assisted her in obtaining the correct Social Security and other benefits. When it became apparent that her home could not be repaired due to extensive termite damage, the staff helped find suitable housing for her and those personal items that she treasured - pieces of furniture, memorabilia from England, paintings of her husband's childhood home and a framed letter from King Edward the VII of England, for whom her father-in-law had served as a jockey.

In 1998, with the assistance of staff, Mrs. Briggs completed all necessary documentation and was able to fulfill her longtime dream of becoming a U.S. citizen. During the ceremony, U.S. District Court Judge Joseph J. Farnan took a particular interest in Mrs. Briggs, telling her story to all in attendance.

Over the years, the Office has continued to help Mrs. Briggs in various ways, including obtaining home aide and nursing assistance, as well as a Senior Companion so that she can fulfill her wish to remain in the community as long as safely possible and continue to enjoy the companionship of "Biscuit", her Yorkshire terrier. This past June, when Mrs. Briggs' home was flooded by heavy rains, the Office obtained a safe respite for her at the Hospital for the Chronically Ill in Smyrna. With her pleasant disposition and wittiness, she became one of the favorite residents at the facility. Care for Biscuit was also arranged and by September the two were happily reunited back in their own home.

Currently, Mrs. Briggs is showing increasing signs of Alzheimer's and the Office is in the process of petitioning for guardianship of her person in the event that decisions regarding her health or living arrangements become necessary. Her input will be sought and all reasonable efforts will be made to honor her wishes if appointed and decision-making related to her person becomes necessary.

The Public Guardian, Linda Connors, sums it up well when she says:

We feel that our involvement in Mrs. Briggs' life has undoubtedly allowed her to have the least restrictive lifestyle possible during the latter part of her life. As with all of the wards for which we serve as guardian, we take our responsibilities to Mrs. Briggs very seriously and are humbled by the role that the Court permits us to take in protecting her and advocating for the best quality of life for her that is possible.

A GLANCE AT THE FY 2008 JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

The development of the Judicial Branch budget involves a lengthy process lasting almost a full year from start to finish. The process begins, internally, with courts and non-judicial agencies submitting their requests to the Chief Justice for mission critical operating and capital needs each August. Operating requests include staffing and all other types of requests, except capital or building construction and maintenance costs. The budget requests are thoroughly vetted by the court administrators and the chief judges. Development of the request requires the input and cooperation of each of the courts as individual court requests are pared and branch-wide priorities are developed to ensure that the request focuses only on the most crucial items. Once the priorities are established, the budget request is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in mid-October, with the public hearing on that request with OMB usually occurring in November. The Governor's recommended budget, including the Governor's recommendations regarding the Judicial Branch's budget, is introduced as legislation in January. As a separate Branch of Government, the Judicial Branch has the option of requesting additional budget items beyond those recommended by the Governor, at its hearing before the Joint Finance Committee in the spring. The final budget is generally adopted in June.

In his remarks at the public hearing on the budget on November 14, 2006, Chief Justice Myron T. Steele stated that the Judiciary's FY '08 budget request focuses only on the most critical needs of the Judicial Branch and "does not contain 'nice to have' items". He further noted that, although the request is slightly higher than in the last two years, this demonstrates that the Judicial Branch has "finally reached a 'breaking point' as the result of our tight budget requests in the recent past."

For fiscal year 2008 (which extends from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008), the Judicial Branch's top mission critical requests for the operating budget are:

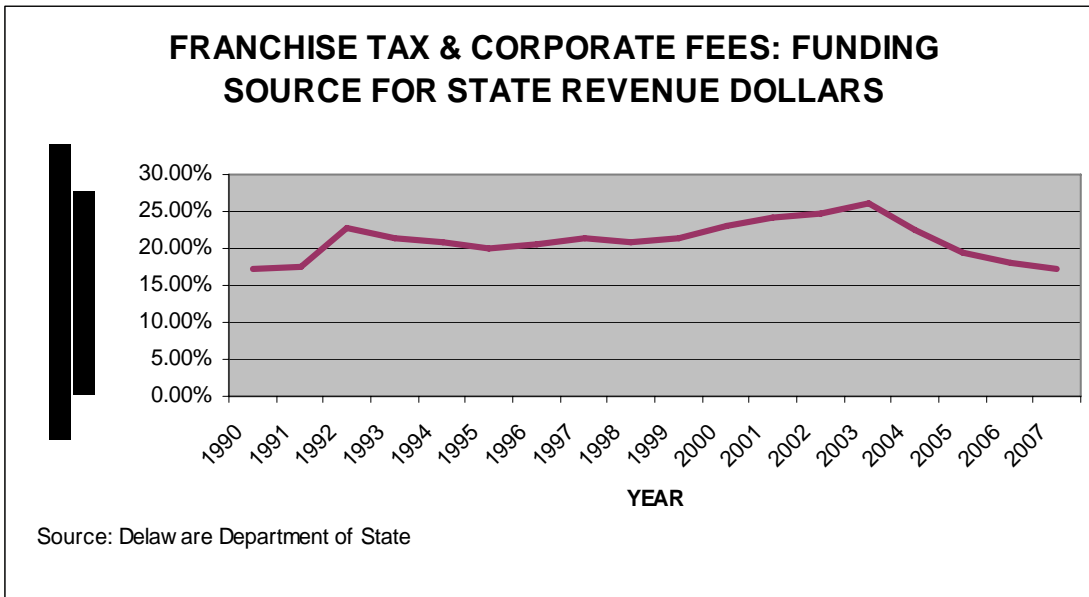
- Expanding leased space in Justice of the Peace Court 13 so that court 12 can be merged with it and the additional space in the Court 12 building can be used to expand specialty courts (such as truancy and civil red light cases)
- Increasing funding for replacement of technology equipment to accommodate scanning and other needs for COTS
- Providing two additional judgeships and related staff for the Superior Court
- Providing additional courtroom staff for the Court of Common Pleas
- Providing electronic court reporters to enhance security by permitting judicial assistants to focus on security, and to improve existing ability to meet public need and the requirement of maintaining the court record.

The top three mission critical capital requests for FY 2008 are:

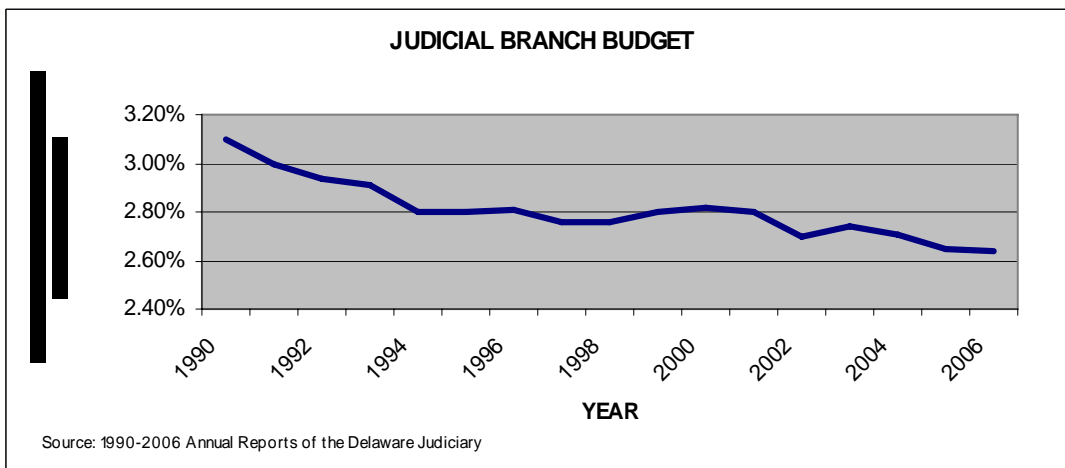
- Completing the expansion and renovation of the Kent County Courthouse complex
- Improving courthouse security through various physical security improvements and equipment as identified by the U.S. Marshal
- Funding minor capital improvements including those needed for code compliance in the Justice of the Peace Court.

THE DELAWARE COURTS – AN OUTSTANDING VALUE

The Delaware Judiciary’s national and international reputation plays a key role in attracting businesses and contributing to the State’s resources through sources such as the franchise tax and corporate fees, which together account for close to 20% of State revenues.



The Judiciary receives less than 3% of State appropriations.



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NEW FIRE SAFETY PLAN IMPLEMENTED IN THE NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

To enhance fire safety and preparedness in the New Castle County Courthouse (NCCCH), the Administrative Office of the Courts worked with the individual courts to implement a new fire safety plan in the NCCCH in early November 2006. The success of this increased emphasis on safety was demonstrated on November 17th when the first fire drill under the new safety plan was held.

**DO YOU KNOW
THE EMERGENCY
EXIT IN YOUR
BUILDING TO
USE IN THE
EVENT OF AN
EMERGENCY?**

IF NOT, FIND OUT!

The building was evacuated in a timely manner, meeting the approval of the Wilmington Fire Marshal's office, which was present to observe the process.

The smooth evacuation process was the result of numerous training sessions held in recent months by the Administrative Office of the Courts, working with its fire safety consultant. These have included four training sessions for the Quick Response Team (composed of security personnel from each of the courts), which focused on the teams' responsibilities,

communications, and knowledge of the new fire safety plan. In conjunction with this training, two drills were conducted in which the team responded to various fires reported throughout the building.

In addition, 24 employee training sessions and a special session for judicial officers were conducted to provide an opportunity for every employee to receive training on the new fire safety plan and changes to the fire alarm system. The training sessions focused on reviewing all building exits, the need to immediately exit the building upon fire alarm activation, handicapped evacuation, and roles and responsibilities of fire wardens in evacuating the building. An additional four training sessions were conducted for the fire wardens themselves to provide more detailed information on their responsibilities.

All training sessions also reviewed a new procedure whereby the entire building is immediately evacuated once it is determined that an alarm reflects an actual hazard. Previously, only the floor on which the problem occurred and the floors directly above and below it were immediately evacuated, with additional floors being evacuated on an as needed basis. Evacuation procedures will continue to be tested on a regular basis with fire drills held at least four times per year.

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We are pleased to present the winter issue of the **Delaware Docket**, the Newsletter of the Delaware Judiciary, which is published semi-annually to provide updates on activities and events in the Judicial community. All are welcome to suggest topics, contribute articles for future editions, and provide suggestions on the newsletter.

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