

Clerk's Office and Shared Services Written Updates – April 2015 Federal Practice Committee

Jury Instruction Database. The bank of jury instructions given in civil and criminal trials in our district from 2000 is now live. See the court's website at <http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/attorney/jury-instructions-bank>.

New CM/ECF Jury Event. The jury team now uses an event in CM/ECF to allow the jury team to electronically file the supplemental questionnaires and the jury pool trial report three business days before trial. Previously, these documents were faxed to each attorney in the case. Access to the PDF is restricted to case participants and the court. If any additional questionnaires are received after the filing of the notice, paper copies are provided to counsel at the time of jury selection.

Supplemental Questionnaire (SQ) Response. The SQ was revised and added to eJuror in September. The juror response rate since then has improved. For the April jury pools, 160 out of 167 qualified (95.82%) Lincoln jurors submitted the SQ; 86 out of 89 (96.6%) qualified Omaha jurors submitted the SQ. These numbers do not include excused or disqualified jurors, but the jury administrators have found that even excused or disqualified jurors are nevertheless completing the SQ.

Public Court Calendar. At Judge Zwart's suggestion, the public court calendar at <http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/court-calendar> was adjusted to display the duration of hearings.

Attorney Assessment Reminder. The 2015-2016 Biennial Assessment was sent on January 5. The clerk's office sent e-mails to 2,633 registered attorneys, 555 e-mails to non-registered attorneys (members of our bar who are not registered for CM/ECF and whose e-mail addresses we obtained from the Nebraska State Bar Association), and 592 letters to non-registered attorneys (members of our bar who are not registered for CM/ECF and for whom we do not have an e-mail address). On March 9, Jennifer Stone sent e-mail reminders to 786 registered users and 68 non-registered CM/ECF users who had still not paid the 2015-2016 assessment. On March 10, we mailed 142 reminder letters to non-registered attorneys. On April 15, Jennifer and Kathy Griess sent out a notice to 98 attorneys who still have not paid their assessment and are an attorney involved in a pending case. As of March 31, 2015, we have deposited \$39,300 from the attorney assessments into the Federal Practice Fund. We project the additional receipt of \$12,700, for a total of \$52,000.

Caseload. Based on reports available in CM/ECF for the 12-month period ending March 31, civil cases increased by 6.22% over the same period last year, and the number of criminal defendants decreased by 9.18%. As for the court's pending caseload, there were 559 pending civil cases and 563 pending criminal case as of March 31.

NextGen CM/ECF. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has updated the schedule for implementing NextGen CM/ECF. A small group of courts will receive the first release of the updated software this summer for testing. After those courts have implemented the NextGen program in their live databases, the software will be released to the other district courts. At this time, we anticipate testing and training to take place in our court in fall 2015.

New Phone System. The court will cutover to a new phone system on the evening of September 10. As a precautionary measure, court staff has been asked to not schedule courtroom proceedings that require use of the phone system on September 11.

Judicial Conference Policies on Space Reduction. As of October 2014, approximately 242,403 square feet has been eliminated from the judiciary's rent bill, resulting in a savings of \$5,786,283 million annually. There is no plan to revisit or extend the judiciary's national three percent space reduction target, which is to be achieved by FY 2018. To the extent a circuit exceeds its pro-rata share of the national three percent space reduction target by the end of FY 2018, any excess space released will be tracked and recognized by the Committee and credited to that circuit's overall reduction quota. Locally, the court has released its space in North Platte and Lincoln Courtroom 3 in addition to other small spaces in Lincoln and Omaha.