



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

Clerk Dorothy Brown and Chief Judge Timothy Evans to Launch E-filing Pilot

Project Will Move Cook County Attorneys from In Line to Online

Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown and Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans announced that the Circuit Court of Cook County will launch an electronic filing pilot project in the Individual Commercial Calendar Section of the Law Division in April 2009.

E-filing is the automated online process of creating a court file, paying associated filing fees and electronically file-stamping and storing most court documents. The process increases efficiency for attorneys, self-represented litigants and court clerks.

The Clerk's Office and the Office of the Chief Judge have been collaborating on the project since 2007 after receiving approval from the Supreme Court of Illinois.

The current manual process of filing court documents requires attorneys to create a file in their offices, and then travel to the Clerk's Office with the paperwork and payment. At the Clerk's Office, lawyers and self-represented litigants typically have to wait in line until their turn to submit their documents, pay their fees and have their papers stamped and copied by the counter clerks. E-Filing reduces this entire process to a simple procedure conducted in one location: a desktop computer, whether in an office or at home.

Clerk Brown explained, "E-filing will streamline the process for filing court documents, basically allowing attorneys to move from in line at the Clerk's Office to online with the Clerk's Office. The launching of this pilot will bring us another step closer to my vision of a truly integrated, electronic court system." The Clerk's Office's goal is to eventually expand e-filing to all court divisions.

She continued, "Under this pilot, attorneys and self-represented litigants may file documents in Law Division Individual Commercial Calendar Section cases by simply using the Internet. The system will allow them to file documents electronically, pay filing fees, and receive a file-stamped copy of the documents, all without ever leaving their homes or offices. E-filing also allows certain documents to be served electronically."

Chief Judge Evans enthusiastically supports the pilot project, which includes plans by the Clerk's Office to host a series of e-filing demonstrations to prepare related court system agencies and members of the legal community for the launch of the pilot.

Evans said, "Clerk Brown and I are eager to embrace technology that will help make court operations more efficient and user-friendly."

Clerk Brown thanked Chief Judge Evans for his support of the e-filing project, noting, "Chief Judge Evans and I share the primary goal of finding the most effective ways to deliver swift and equal justice for the citizens of Cook County."

The Cook County Clerk's Office's E-Filing system is the first fully integrated, electronic filing system in the state of Illinois, and only the second in the world. The filing information is entered once and replicated across multiple computer systems, thereby eliminating redundant data entry and reducing exposure to human error.

Attorneys practicing in Cook County are encouraged to register their email addresses on the Clerk's Office website, www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org, to receive updates on the e-filing pilot. Questions and comments may be sent to ecourt@cookcountycourt.com.

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