

Lauderdale County Chancery Court begins e-filing

February 5, 2014

Lauderdale County Chancery Court began accepting voluntary e-filing of court documents on Feb. 3. E-filing will become mandatory on March 3, according to an order signed by Chancellors Jerry Mason and Lawrence Primeaux.

Judge Primeaux said, "I am proud that Lauderdale County is in the first wave of counties implementing this advanced system. When fully in force, it will save parties money, and will be a major convenience for lawyers."

Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr., who has spearheaded development of an e-filing and documents management system for state courts, said, "The addition of Lauderdale County to MEC is another significant step toward the goal of a unified statewide e-filing system for the judiciary. The Lauderdale County Bar is very progressive, and Meridian is an important hub of business activity and a center of influence for east central Mississippi."

The Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) program, under the supervision of the Mississippi Supreme Court, is adapted from the electronic filing system used in federal district courts.

E-filing allows judges and attorneys to file and view documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and makes public access to court records more convenient. "The courthouse is now open 24 hours a day to file and view things" via Internet access, MEC Counsel Clint Pentecost told a Dec. 4 meeting of the Lauderdale County Bar Association.

E-filing is currently utilized in 22 trial courts in 13 counties. Other e-filing trial court jurisdictions include the Chancery Courts in Desoto, Grenada, Holmes, Montgomery, Rankin, Webster and Yazoo counties; Chancery and Circuit Courts in Clay County; and all trial courts – Chancery, Circuit and County Courts – in Madison, Harrison, Hinds and Warren counties.

Approximately 20 other trial courts are on a waiting list for implementation of e-filing. MEC technology and training are provided free to counties. The only cost to local courts is computer hardware and Internet access.

The Mississippi Supreme Court made e-filing of appellate briefs and motions mandatory on Jan. 1 before the state's highest court and the Court of Appeals.

More than 4,150 attorneys – 60 percent of attorneys in the state – are registered to use the MEC system. Also, more than 1,400 non-attorneys are currently registered to use the system to access court records.

Free training for attorneys and their staff is provided by MEC at the Supreme Court Courthouse, 450 High Street in Jackson, and in the venues in which e-filing is implemented. The training schedule and online registration are available at this link: http://courts.ms.gov/mec/mec_attorney_training.html.

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