

# **Oktibbeha Chancery Court latest to adopt e-filing**

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The Chancery Court of Oktibbeha County will begin accepting voluntary electronic filing on July 1, and is expected to move to mandatory e-filing Aug. 1.

Oktibbeha will become the fourth county of the six-county Fourteenth Chancery District to implement electronic filing using the Mississippi Electronic Courts program. Chancery Courts in Clay, Lowndes and Webster counties already utilize e-filing.

Senior Fourteenth District Chancery Judge Dorothy Colom said that the MEC system helps her with docket management and gives her remote access to files from the e-filing courts, no matter where she is holding court.

“I am excited to have Oktibbeha County join in. It will help all of us,” Judge Colom said.

Chancery Court is the court which hears divorce and custody disputes. Emergency petitions regarding child abuse and neglect as well as domestic abuse come to Chancery Court. Issues involving the safety and well being of children require immediate attention and action, and e-filing capabilities help expedite those court decisions and actions, Judge Colom said.

The 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.

Oktibbeha Chancery Court’s move to e-filing will bring the total number of e-filing trial courts to 26. The Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) program, under the supervision of the Mississippi Supreme Court, is utilized in 15 counties.

Other e-filing trial courts include the Chancery Courts in DeSoto, Grenada, Holmes, Lauderdale, Lowndes, Montgomery, Webster and Yazoo counties; Chancery and Circuit Courts in Clay County; and all trial courts – Chancery, Circuit and County Courts – in Madison, Harrison, Hinds, Rankin and Warren counties. The Mississippi Supreme Court and Court of Appeals also utilize e-filing for petitions and motions.

About 4,400 attorneys, about two-thirds of the attorneys who practice in Mississippi, are registered to use the MEC system. Non-attorney use is also increasing. More than 1,700 non-attorneys are registered in MEC.

The MEC program is adapted from the electronic filing system used in federal district courts. MEC technology and training are provided free to counties. The only cost to local courts is computer hardware and Internet access.

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