

Harrison County Youth Court to move from Gulfport to Biloxi

October 6, 2016

The Harrison County Youth Court is moving from Gulfport to Biloxi, with the new office opening at 8 a.m. Oct. 17 in the former Department of Health Building at 761 Esters Blvd.

Friday, Oct. 14, will be the Youth Court's last day at the old address at 47 Maples Drive in Gulfport. Everything will be packed by 5 p.m. for the weekend move.

The Harrison County Juvenile Drug Court will move at the same time to a new building north of the Harrison County Courthouse in Biloxi. The building which will house Youth Court was not large enough to accommodate the Drug Court.

The Youth Court will be located across the street from the Harrison County Juvenile Detention Center.

"The entire Harrison County Youth Court system is moving to Biloxi. The most advantageous part of all of this is that the Youth Court will be in immediate proximity to the youth detention facility," said Harrison County Court Judge Margaret Alfonso, who supervises Youth Court.

The move is expected to save the county about \$400,000 a year in transportation costs and staff time. "It's been a great expense for the county to transport the kids back and forth for court," Judge Alfonso said. Two officers accompany each juvenile on a trip from the detention facility to court. "The move is a cost savings to the county and a liability savings for the county."

Services for children in detention will be more readily available. "Since Youth Court is going to be housed across the street from the detention facility, counseling services and probation services are going to be much more readily available for children in detention," Judge Alfonso said.

The Youth Court will change its mailing address and telephone numbers. The new mailing address is P.O. Box 134, Biloxi, MS 39533. The new phone number is 228-435-3201, and the fax number is 228-435-4784.

The new Youth Court location is half a block from the Harrison County Courthouse in Biloxi and across the street from Harrison County Justice Court. "We are in the middle of things for the first time, which I think is going to be really advantageous," Judge Alfonso said.

"We are really appreciative of the Board of Supervisors' support of this move," Judge Alfonso said.

State budget cuts set the move in motion. The Health Department vacated the building on Esters Boulevard due to budget cuts. Harrison County employees did the renovation work to accommodate the Youth Court.

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