

# STEARNS COUNTY LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Stearns County Law Library Board of Trustees  
David Myers, Esq., Chair  
Commissioner Leigh Lienzmeier  
Denis Hynes, Esq.

Stearns County Law Library Staff  
Christine Johnson, Law Librarian  
Mark Layden, Law Librarian

Stearns County Law Library Self-Help Center Staff  
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## **Major Activities for 2009**

### **Governance/Supervision**

The Law Library Board of Trustees Officers are: Attorney David Meyers - board chair, Attorney Denis Hynes and County Commissioner Leigh Lenzmeier – board members.

### **Budget**

Complete year-end expenditures and expenses for the law library are not yet available for 2009. Financial reports will be updated as December 2009 information is provided by the Auditor's office.

Attached to this report is a comparison of 2009 budgeted and actual expenditures to date. Also attached are fines and fees received through November 2009.

### **Law Library Users**

Due to staff turnover, statistical reporting in 2009 was uneven. Totals contained in attached reports do not accurately reflect total library usage and research requests. However, the information gathered and presented does provide a snapshot of the diversity of information and services provided by the law library staff.

The law library staff is committed to keeping accurate statistics and usage information in 2010.

The law library added 39 new patrons in 2009.

Library research requests come via email, telephone and through patron visits.

The amount of research assistance and materials requested from inmates at the Stearns County Law Enforcement Center continued to increase in 2009. There were over 78 requests made in 2009. In addition to requests for specific cases, popular inquiries include information on speedy trials, Blakely v. Washington issues, the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines grid and Minnesota statutes.

The Law Library conference room is free and open to the public. The conference room was used throughout the year by attorneys, mediators and parents viewing the court ordered video entitled "In the Best Interest of Your Child".

It is a desire that the conference room be utilized more frequently. To that end, the Stearns/Benton Bar Association was contacted. They included an announcement in an email making members aware of the room's availability. The law library's website also contains a notification that the conference room can be reserved by contacting the library staff.

### **Self-Help and Pro Se Services**

The Self-Help Center at the law library was started in August of 2006 in cooperation with Central Minnesota Legal Services. The purpose of the Self-Help Center is to assist pro se litigants in representing themselves and to facilitate access to the state civil court system.

The Self-Help Center staff attorney's duties include providing assistance in completing civil court forms, providing assistance with the civil court process, answering general questions about the court system, and providing education about court procedures so that they may better represent themselves in court.

Marie Darst Roes, the Self-Help attorney, continued to be very busy with these tasks in 2009.

In November 2007, Stearns County judges signed an order requiring all pro se marriage dissolution paperwork be reviewed by the Self-Help Center staff attorney prior to filing in the Court Administrator's office. Benton County has a similar requirement that dissolution papers be reviewed by the Self-Help Center.

### **Education, Training, and Outreach**

The law library continues to be a destination for legal research classes at St. Cloud Technical College, Globe University/Minnesota School of Business and St. Cloud State University. Students in these programs tour the library as part of their coursework and are made aware of the research materials available at the law library.

Free publications prepared by the Minnesota Attorney General's Office and The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition continue to be extremely popular. Titles include Getting a Divorce, Child Support Basics and Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders among others.

Copies of blank Summons and Complaints, Motions, and Answers and Powers of Attorney are available to patrons and frequently requested.

### **Technology**

Law library patrons have free wireless internet access as well as traditional internet access through the two public computer terminals. Free Westlaw is available on the public computers.

The law library continues to enjoy an online catalog system that allows materials to be checked out and in smoothly and efficiently. This system also allows for streamlined cataloging functions as well easy report generation and circulation management. This system also allows patrons access to the law library's holdings and holdings status via the internet.

**Future Goals**

The Law Library is committed to continuing to provide superior legal materials and research assistance to members of the bar and the community at-large. Care will be taken to provide these services in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Layden  
Law Librarian

Christine Ditty Johnson  
Law Librarian

January 8, 2010

**2006 STEARNS COUNTY SELF HELP CENTER STATISTICS**

	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>490</b>
In Person	45	66	66	76	102	355
Telephone	4	11	28	25	67	135
						<b>490</b>
3d Party Custody	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Support	7	2	14	17	22	62
Civil Misc	4	4	9	6	6	29
Conciliation Court	6	12	12	7	7	44
Conservatorship	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contempt	1	0	5	2	10	18
Criminal Expunge	0	3	2	2	6	13
Custody	4	5	9	9	15	42
Dissolution	7	4	14	20	31	76
Guardianship	0	0	0	0	7	7
Harassment Order	4	8	5	9	12	38
Housing Expunge	0	0	1	1	2	4
Judgments	3	2	5	2	7	19
Landlord/Tenant	2	7	1	1	5	16
Motor Vehicle	0	0	0	0	3	3
Name Change	0	1	2	2	4	9
Order Protection	3	8	8	9	18	46
Parental Delegation	0	2	0	0	5	7
Step Parent Adopt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undocumented	0	0	0	0	0	0
	41	58	87	87	160	<b>433</b>
<b>CHIPS</b>						
	0	1	1	3	2	7
<b>NA Civil</b>	6	15	2	11	5	39
<b>Criminal</b>	2	3	4	0	2	11
	8	19	7	14	9	57

\* Lists only one subject matter per contact



**2008 STEARNS COUNTY SELF HELP CENTER STATISTICS**

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>2285</b>
In Person	204	175	156	206	194	227	227	196	159	218	148	175	1154
Telephone	117	124	101	115	96	79	94	105	80	78	86	79	3439
Dissol Reviews	15	16	14	21	13	23	22	21	12	12	13	18	200
3d Party Custody	0	3	1	2	2	5	3	2	6	3	1	4	32
Child Support	62	74	66	78	47	42	58	60	38	50	95	41	651
Civil Misc	11	8	3	5	7	7	8	3	2	0	13	0	67
Conciliation Court	15	8	8	8	5	14	16	13	13	8	7	8	123
Conservatorship	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Contempt	5	2	4	9	7	1	1	1	4	3	0	2	44
Criminal Expunge	10	2	5	4	13	13	6	1	5	16	2	6	83
Custody	33	36	35	35	92	48	42	48	23	51	46	43	472
Dissolution	100	99	89	97	73	74	93	91	80	94	72	86	1048
Guardianship	0	2	1	4	0	3	0	2	2	1	0	1	16
Harassment Order	21	8	4	16	19	15	20	11	18	21	15	14	182
Housing Expunge	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	4	0	10
Judgments	5	4	0	1	9	4	0	1	1	5	4	3	37
Landlord/Tenant	9	9	8	8	13	8	14	6	9	10	10	9	113
Motor Vehicle	2	2	3	8	3	6	3	4	4	0	3	3	41
Name Change	6	4	4	4	5	9	12	9	3	8	5	4	71
Order Protection	11	13	9	18	26	30	17	24	20	18	13	16	215
Parental Delegation	1	2	4	1	5	0	2	5	0	3	0	0	23
Step Parent Adopt	1	1	0	0	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	10
Undocumented	4	1	10	10	5	6	5	0	1	0	1	2	45
CHIPS	297	279	253	309	276	286	300	284	231	293	233	247	3288
NA Civil	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Criminal	17	20	4	10	14	18	19	17	8	3	0	7	137
	4	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	8
	24	20	4	12	14	20	21	17	8	3	1	7	151

\* Lists only one subject matter per contact

### 2009 STEARNS COUNTY SELF HELP CENTER STATISTICS

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>4050</b>
In Person	213	233	206	274	239	254	325	223	321	287	198	260	3033
Telephone	106	82	105	102	98	91	101	91	41	52	62	86	1017
													<b>4050</b>
Dissol Reviews	41	30	27	19	31	29	33	32	37	25	29	42	375
3d Party Custody	3	7	8	12	3	2	9	4	5	5	8	8	74
Child Support	66	61	61	96	66	66	68	46	63	72	38	65	768
Civil Misc	9	3	2	3	3	5	9	11	4	12	14	9	84
Conciliation Court	10	14	6	8	12	6	16	11	11	7	8	6	115
Conservatorship	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	3	2	2	16
Contempt	1	1	3	7	0	2	4	6	2	1	3	7	37
Criminal Expunge	15	12	10	15	6	5	13	5	3	12	6	7	109
Custody	49	37	46	50	33	33	47	40	46	38	85	37	482
Dissolution	107	114	110	104	101	117	125	111	105	104	71	120	1289
Guardianship	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	2	9
Harassment Order	15	10	12	12	36	22	36	13	37	18	17	16	244
Housing Expunge	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	10
Judgments	6	3	5	4	7	8	5	11	4	8	5	5	71
Landlord/Tenant	3	6	5	5	10	15	15	6	9	7	9	6	96
Motor Vehicle	3	2	1	4	1	7	6	3	4	9	6	5	51
Name Change	2	5	1	4	5	3	6	3	8	3	5	4	49
Order Protection	14	17	20	27	21	21	19	16	20	12	14	13	214
Parental Delegation	1	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	9	2	0	2	29
StepParent Adopt	1	1	1	3	6	3	1	1	0	1	4	0	22
Undocumented				6	4	9	9	7	2	4	8	10	59
	299	299	294	363	316	330	395	301	335	319	253	324	3828
<b>CHIPS</b>													
N/A Civil	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	2			2		8
Criminal	17	11	17	12	20	14	28	11	27	17	8	17	199
	3	2	1	0	1	1	3	0		3	4	5	23
	20	16	18	13	21	15	31	13	362	339	267	346	230

\* Lists only one subject matter per contact



Circulation Reports 2008 2009

2008				2009			
	Checked out	Checked in	New patrons		Checked out	Checked in	New patrons
JANUARY	44	35	6	JANUARY	34	39	4
FEBRUARY	37	39	4	FEBRUARY	49	27	0
MARCH	30	29	2	MARCH	38	53	3
APRIL	32	32	2	APRIL	38	29	5
MAY	17	29	1	MAY	34	29	2
JUNE	29	19	4	JUNE	10	21	4
JULY	45	34	8	JULY	24	26	3
AUGUST	61	58	3	AUGUST	13	21	5
SEPTEMBER	60	52	2	SEPTEMBER	32	30	2
OCTOBER	33	47	1	OCTOBER	25	20	3
NOVEMBER	25	24	4	NOVEMBER	36	18	5
DECEMBER	42	40	5	DECEMBER	31	28	2
TOTAL	455	438	42	TOTAL	364	341	38

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IN DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF STEARNS

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

ORDER

WHEREAS, there is clearly a demonstrated need for the court to provide greater assistance to pro se family court litigants to improve access to the courts for both pro se and represented litigants, and

WHEREAS, the needed assistance exceeds the currently offered services provided by the judiciary, existing judicial staff, and court administration because of the complexity of the assistance needed, the necessity of neutrality and the present workload of the courts, and

WHEREAS, the Stearns County Law Library and the court have worked to meet this need by the law library contracting with Central Minnesota Legal Services to provide a Self Help Program as defined by rule 110 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice, and

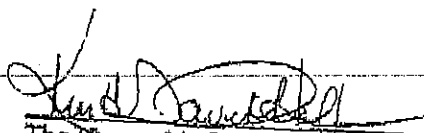
WHEREAS, in order to provide pro se litigants with meaningful access and to ensure the integrity of the hearing process and the efficient use of the courts, it is necessary and desirable that pro se dissolution documentation, both with and without children, be screened to ensure compliance with legal and procedural standards.

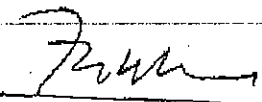
NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that all pro se dissolution documentation must be screened by the Self Help Program attorney, or other Self Help personnel as defined by rule 110.02, located in the Stearns County Law Library prior to the acceptance of the paperwork by Stearns County Court Administration. The Self Help Program shall indicate that the paperwork has been screened by stamping the documentation accordingly.

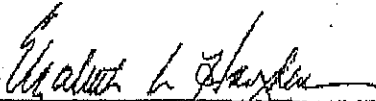
This Order shall remain in effect until revoked or amended by further order of this Court.

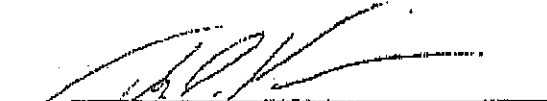
Dated: Nov. 7, 2007

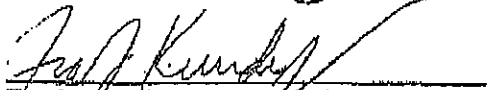
BY THE COURT:

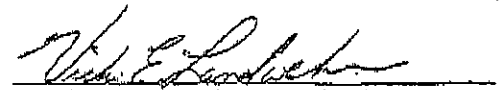
  
The Honorable Kris Davick-Halfen

  
The Honorable Frederick Grunke


  
The Honorable Elizabeth Hayden

  
The Honorable Thomas Knapp

  
The Honorable Frank Kundrat

  
The Honorable Vicki Landwehr

  
The Honorable Skipper Pearson

  
The Honorable Paul Widick