

STEARNS COUNTY LAW LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Stearns County Law Library Board of Trustees

David Myers, Esq., Chair
Commissioner Leigh Lienzmeier
Denis Hynes, Esq.

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Christine Johnson, Law Librarian
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Major Activities for 2010

Governance/Supervision

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

Budget

Attached to this report is the 2010 budget.

The law library began the 2010 with expenditures set to outpace revenues. However, through an increase in fees/fines and a reduced monthly Westlaw burden, the law library ended the year reversing the revenue shortfall trend.

At the July 16, 2010 board meeting, the trustees voted to approve a \$2 increase in the fees/fines per case. The law library fee/fine per case was raised to \$10. This fee/fine increase took effect September, 2010.

In addition, the law library was able to renegotiate their Westlaw contract which resulted in significantly reducing the monthly subscription amount.

Revenue projections for 2011 are on track to bring about a gradual increase in the library's cash reserves.

Law Library Use

For 2010 the librarians decided to create a new category for the library's activity report by combining computer use with those patrons that limit their research to books. Many of the library patrons use the library for research without checking materials out, or using a computer, by combining these categories it was thought that this would allow for a more accurate assessment of library activity. During the year non-attorney use of the computers/books category was recorded at 770 patrons; while 558 attorneys used this combined classification. Research requests in 2010, without the addition of this new category, were 664 non-attorney requests with a 154 attorney requests for librarian assistance. 2010 saw an increase in requests from the inmates of the Stearns County Law Enforcement Center from 78 in 2009 to 95 in 2010. The new category, along with a more diligent recording of patron requests for information, by phone, e-mail, and in person; along with the addition of the two MNCIS computers will lead to an even greater increase in library activities for 2011.

Circulation of library materials in 2010 was virtually the same as 2009 with 372 books checked out and 398 returned. The library added 56 new patrons for the year bringing the total to 272 patrons that have been registered since 2006 when the library initiated a computer based catalog and database.

Beginning in January 2011 a 25 dollar fee will now be required to reserve the library's conference room; this fee will be waived for non-profit organizations. The librarians felt that a small fee would aid in deferring the cost of maintaining the library, and in comparison to other rooms available to be reserved in the court house, which cost 50\$ for half a day, the library will still offer an affordable alternative.

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 main goals of the Self-Help Center are to assist pro se litigants in understanding and properly completing the paperwork that is provided by the court system, and to educate them about court procedures so that they may better represent themselves in court. In May of 2010 Marie Roes, the initial self-help attorney, left the program for a warmer climate, and was replaced by Olga Zenteno. In July 2010, Ms. Kelly Pfennig, a paralegal, was hired as a staff person to assist Ms. Zenteno. The Self-Help program continues to be extremely busy, and the statistics for this program will be provided in the Appendix.

Education, Outreach, and Training

The library offers a valuable legal resource for local colleges. St. Cloud Technical College, Globe University/Minnesota School of Business, and St. Cloud State University use the library for legal research as a part of course work, and bring students in for tours of the library so as to be made aware of the service and materials the library provides.

A wide variety of free informational pamphlets and forms are available at the library. Some topics covered by the pamphlets are conciliation court, divorce, probate, and landlord/tenant. The library also offers a variety of free forms to the public such as power of attorney, delegation of parental authority, mechanics' liens, and third party custody.

Technology

Due to the increased demand to reserve the library's conference room for depositions by organizations outside the city of St. Cloud, as well as outside the state of Minnesota, the librarians created a Facebook page with posted pictures of the conference room and other library areas so that these organizations could decide if the library's resources meet their needs. To further enhance the capabilities of the library's conference room the library invested in a video camera that allows for video conferencing calls.

Looking to the Future

In the coming year the self-help attorney, Olga Zenteno, has proposed that library begin an outreach program to the Hispanic community located in the cities of Long Prairie and Melrose. Ms. Zenteno and the librarians will put together a Power Point presentation to inform this community of the libraries services.

The Stearns County Law Library has experienced rapid growth in use since the renovation of its physical resources and the initiation of the self-help program in 2006. The costs incurred by the library to carry out these projects has reached a point of equilibrium due to the increased take in fees and fines; however if the library's programs continue to grow we should look to a second income stream. This would assist in adequately funding our programs so as to not raise fees and fines or further diminish the library's saving account.

2010 STEARNS COUNTY SELF HELP CENTER STATISTICS

	Jan	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
In Person	270	374	338	424	314	145	195	265	228	243	257	228	3281
Telephone	89	106	105	124	103	34	25	81	104	129	130	118	1148
Total	359	480	443	548	417	179	220	346	332	372	387	346	4429
Dissoi Reviews	25	37	37	61	37	14		2	32	25	7	9	286
Spanish Speaking								9	7	11	11	4	58
3D Custody	5	5	2	7	3	1	1	5	1	1	0		31
Child Support	59	60	73	76	63	14	29	29	21	21	22	22	460
Civil Misc	8	14	11	16	17	3	2	11	4	4	4		94
Conciliation	7	13	6	10	5	3	4	2	6	7	6		79
Conservatorship	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0		13
Contempt	4	4	2	3	2	0	3	3	3	0	0		22
Crim Expungement	4	14	7	7	7	4	5	5	3	6	6		68
Custody	34	56	53	46	29	48	17	52	35	41	32		409
Dissolution	84	103	112	164	113	40	75	79	87	64	69		990
Evidion	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	11	4		16
Forfeiture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	1		10
Grandparent Visist	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	3		10
Guardianship	6	4	2	2	0	0	5	2	0	6	1		28
Harassment	9	13	4	14	22	20	19	7	21	19	2		160
Hous Expungment			3	1	0	0	0	0	0				4
Judgments	2	9	5	4	2	8	0	11	12	11	3		97
Landlord/Tenant	2	9	10	8	4	1	2	3	11	6	13		69
Motor Vehicle	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	1	0		6
Misc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	13	19	25		69
Name Change	3	4	3	8	4	1	2	3	2	3	3		40
OFP	16	16	9	11	16	10	20	19	15	7	15		154
Paternal Delegation	0	1	2	1	3	2	0	2	3	7			22
Paternity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5		5
Probate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Step Parent Adopt	0	6	1	4	2	0	1	0	0	2	3		19

ATTORNEY REQUESTS
2010

MONTH	Case Law	Criminal	Probate	Other civil	Landlord/Tenant	Real property	Computer/books
January	4	2		6	1		31
February	3	1		5			30
March	5	3		7	1	6	39
April	4	2		6		2	38
May	3			9			49
June	5			2			44
July	3			8		3	57
August	4			9			53
September	3	2		1			60
October	2	2		8			60
November	4	0		9			51
December	2	0		2			40
TOTALS	42	12		79	2	12	558
TOTAL	712						

