

DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF FULL ELECTRONIC PROCESSING OF E-FILED DOCUMENTS ELIMINATING PROCESSING DELAYS

On July 27, 2009, Dallas County District Clerk Gary Fitzsimmons implemented complete electronic processing of all eFiled documents in the civil courts. The office no longer prints and assembles paper copies prior to delivery to the courts, sending the original electronic documents directly instead.

“This marks a major milestone in the Digital Courts Project and in particular for enhancing the speed and efficiency of document delivery to the civil courts,” says Mr. Fitzsimmons.

The program began in March 2009 with a pilot project in Judge Marty Lowy’s 101st civil district court. This was quickly followed by implementation in the 134th District Court, Judge James Stanton, in June. Both Judges Lowy and Stanton share the same suite of court clerks.

“Without these judges’ willingness to experiment with new initiatives, we would not have been able to move so quickly” says Mr. Fitzsimmons.

Electronic queues have been established for the clerks and the courts to receive and transmit eDocuments from Texas Online. The eDocuments are then imported into a document management system to allow the judges to view them later indexed into the existing case management system. The eDocuments are stored electronically and are never printed and placed in the paper case jacket.

“Most Dallas County eFilers have had no idea that the district clerk treated eFiled documents in the same way as paper documents. With the new electronic processing initiative, we have reduced the time it takes to get eFiled documents to the courts from 3 to 5 days to less than 24 hours.” continues Mr. Fitzsimmons.

All eFiled documents are now available to the legal community and the public through onsite terminals, vastly improving customer service. Certified copies of eFiled documents are now instantly available to the public as well.

Additionally, to maximize the convenience and efficiency gained with the use of digital documents, the District Clerk has launched an initiative to encourage the legal community to eFile through Texas Online exclusively, creating and displaying posters throughout the courthouse to inform the legal community about the enhanced benefits of eFiling.

“Our goal is to realize the full benefits of eFiling and digital document management by moving as many members of the legal community as possible towards using this dramatically improved system,” concludes Mr. Fitzsimmons.