

The Hon. Boyd T. Johnson

Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

The Hon. Stephen F. McCarville

Associate Presiding Judge

Paul A. O'Connell

Court Administrator

A Message From the Presiding Judge



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Now that the elections and holidays are over and the reality of "getting back to normal" sets in for all of us, I want to say THANK YOU for a productive past year of service. Last year we as a court were challenged with unprecedented growth and all the problems that come with it. Rising workloads, the addition of new staff, the continued adjustment to a new courthouse and yes, even bomb threats, all lent to growing levels of anxiety and stress that would trouble even the most veteran of employees. Despite these challenges each of you has continued to do your job with a dedication and professionalism that would be the envy of most courts throughout the state.

As we enter this New Year, I am confident that together we will meet new challenges with that same level of professionalism and dedication that has become synonymous with the court system in Pinal County. I firmly believe it is because of your hard work that we, as a court system, enjoy a reputation for innovation and dedication that is recognized throughout the state. Your hard work and continued efforts to improve the service we provide to the people of this County have not gone unnoticed at many levels throughout the state.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank each of you for your commitment to service and to wish you and your families a happy, prosperous and productive year this year and every year. Your continued commitment to our system of justice and to service to the public is the cornerstone of our excellence as a court system.

Newly Elected Officials Take Oath of Office

Newly elected officials were ceremoniously administered their Oaths of Office by Presiding Judge Boyd T. Johnson at the courthouse on January 5, 2007. The event marked the first occasion where the Clerk of the Court and the Pinal County Sheriff joined Superior Court Judges, Justices of the Peace and Constables for a room filled ceremony.

The ceremony was held in the Superior Court's Jury Assembly Room to a packed audience. The ceremony was opened by the Sheriff's Department Honor Guard posting of the colors followed by an opening prayer by the Sheriff's Department Chaplin. Judge Johnson congratulated those newly elected officials on their

election and thanked the public for their confidence and trust in their elected government officials. Judge Johnson proceeded to administer the Oath of Office to Judges O'Neil, Figueroa and White followed by the Justices of the Peace and constables as a group. Special Oaths of Office were given to Sheriff Vasquez by his brother, Court of Appeals Judge Gary Vasquez, and to Justice of the Peace Arnold Estrada, by Superior Court Judge Gilberto Figueroa, witnessed by Judge Estrada's wife, Mary. Following each swearing in, each official received their Certificates of Election. Following the ceremony a reception was provided to all officials and their guests.



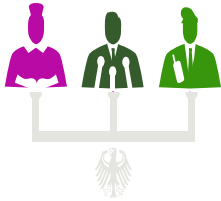
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Special points of interest:

- * Newly Elect Officials Take Office
- * Pre Trial Services Goes Live
- * Citizen's Committee Make Final Recommendations



New Judges Join Superior Court Bench

Three new faces joined the Superior Court Bench as a result of a series of events over the past few months. Former Judge Pro Tempore, **Joseph “Rudy” Georgini**, and **Brenda Oldham**, long time Pinal County practicing attorneys, were elected to the Superior Court bench in November’s general election. Judge Georgini will assume the responsibilities of Division 3 which will include criminal and juvenile dependencies case work. Judge Oldham will join Division

8. Judge Oldham’s responsibilities will be probate and domestic relations after her official start date of January 5, 2007. Both Judges Georgini and Oldham have extensive legal experience with each having practiced in Pinal County for some time. Both are a welcome addition to an already professional and dedicated bench.

The third new member is newly appointed Judge Pro Tempore **Bradley Soos**.

Judge Soos was appointed to the bench by Presiding Judge Boyd T. Johnson in December 2006 after Mr. Soos was unanimously recommended to Judge Johnson by a citizens selection committee. Judge Soos comes to the court after serving with the Pinal County Attorney’s Office as a prosecutor for 16 years. Judge Soos will be responsible for adult criminal case processing as part of Superior Court Division 9.

Justice Court Leads Community Effort

Oracle Brownie Troop #715, local DPS law enforcement and other Pinal County employees joined forces in taking a different approach to Christmas this year. Troop Leaders, Veronica Martinez, (civil traffic clerk at the Oracle Justice Court), Brenda Garcia and Debbie Gallardo, had their Brownie group help a local family in need instead of having the usual party and exchanging of gifts. Starting early in October, the young group of seven girls started bringing items such as canned goods, ornaments and lights to their weekly meetings. The small number of girls were quickly becoming discouraged as the presents and goodies were not amounting to much; so, at this point, local DPS law enforcement were asked to assist. With their acceptance to help, Brownie Troop #715 was able to purchase toys, clothing, food, and Christmas decorations. To

the delight of the lucky family, Troop #715, along with two DPS officers, delivered the items on December 20, 2006. The girls witnessed the valuable lesson that it is truly better to give than to receive.

Ellie Brown (former Justice of the Peace for Precinct 1105), local Oracle residents and the Pinal County SMOR vanpool joined forces in providing a great Christmas to five children from Oracle who are being raised by their grandparents. “Within three days, this wonderful group of people pledged and provided nearly \$800 worth of food, clothing, toys, and staples. It took several trips over the next two weekends to deliver all the gifts. The family was overwhelmed and very grateful for the kindness and generosity shown,” stated Ellie Brown.

Thank you to all those involved in proving that it truly is better to give than to receive!



Special thanks to the following for their contributions to this newsletter:

Ellie Brown

Court Administration

Odette Apodoca

Clerk of the Court

Ruben Castro

Adult Probation

Clarence Cramer

Conciliation Court Services

Melissa Knight

Court Administration

Donna McBride

Juvenile Court Services

Darlene Miller

Juvenile Court Services

Paul O’Connell

Editor

Court Administration

Pretrial Services Unit Goes Live

On January 1, 2007, the Pinal County Pretrial Services team began conducting pretrial release investigations for qualifying inmates. During the very first day of investigations, the team's efforts began to pay dividends. The unit discovered a defendant who had reported a false name and date of birth at the time of arrest. With the assistance of the Pinal County Detention Staff and the Department of Public Safety, the Pretrial team was able to obtain a true identity and verify the existence of two felony warrants not previously known. In addition to Unit Supervisor Ryan Osborn, the Pretrial Services unit staff is currently comprised of four pretrial officers and a support staff member. Deborah Gaines is the lead pretrial officer in the unit and brings over 10 years of experience with Pinal County Adult Probation. Pretrial Officers Alice Liddell, David Houck and Melonie Call are new additions to our department. Alice Liddell has extensive experience in the criminal justice field, including probation and mental health services. Officer Houck brings a wealth of knowledge from his employment with the Arizona Department of Corrections. Melonie Call comes to us from the Child Support Enforcement unit of the Pinal County Attorney's office. Her experience in civil enforcement matters is invaluable to the team. Deanna Goodin, the unit support staff member, was promoted to Secretary I from the front office and coordinates the efforts of the unit.

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J. P. s Attend New Judge Orientation

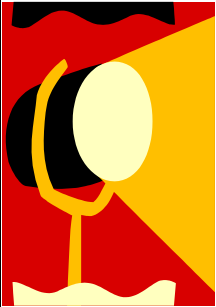
Three new Justices of the Peace join the services as judicial officers to the Pinal County Limited Jurisdiction Court System. In preparing new judges for the bench, the Supreme Court requires a three-week new judge orientation and training program, also known as NJO; two weeks in January and one week in April. The new judge orientation program consists of twenty-eight courses addressing the "nuts and bolts" and "need to know" information on substantive law and rules of procedure, administration and problem solving. This year produced a class roster of forty-one, the largest enrollment to date. Attending the program were:

Judge Larry Bravo will serve as the Justice of the Peace for the Superior-Kearny Justice Court. Judge Bravo attended Pima Community College where he studied Criminal Justice and served as a certified police officer for fifteen years. In June, 2004, he became the Town of Hayden Magistrate before being elected as Justice of the Peace. Judge Bravo has in the past taught at Central Arizona College, the police academy and the national traffic survival school. Judge Bravo stated that he learned much more the second time in attending the NJO. He contributed this to having the experience of sitting on the bench as a magistrate and in knowing what questions to ask.

Judge Arnold Estrada will serve at the Mammoth Justice Court and the Mammoth Magistrate Court. Judge Estrada worked for Pinal County for eight years in the county attorney's office as an Investigative Liaison prior to being elected as Justice of the Peace. He served for many years as a school board member for the Mammoth-San Manuel Unified School district as well as other community committees. Judge Estrada stated that he attended NJO with an open mind, expecting the unexpected. He learned a great deal and is looking forward to applying the studies in his new position and feels very comfortable with the amount of resources available to him as mentors and teachers.

Judge Robert Kent will serve at the Oracle Justice Court. Judge Kent is a lifetime resident of Pinal County. He attended Central Arizona and Phoenix Colleges, served as a supervisor for Magma Copper and Justice of the Peace of the Oracle Justice Court for twelve years. He coached both Little League and Senior League baseball and volunteered his time at local schools. He stated that the organization and execution of subject matter at NJO was "topnotch" and that the knowledge imparted to all attending could only make them better. Judge Kent looks forward to the challenge and opportunity to serve the area citizens and acknowledges the valuable pool of knowledge from which he can draw from.

Congratulations to each of these newly elected Limited Jurisdiction Judges. Pinal County supports you in your future education, training and development.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Adult Probationers Give Back to the Community

The McClellan-Parson Florence American Legion Post #9 Commander **Carl Bell**, Adult probation Surveillance Officer **Dennis Praino**, and a large number of individuals on probation team up on September 6, 2006 in a project to clean up in and around American Legion Post #9. The work crew also assisted in remodeling the kitchen at the post. American Legion is a non-profit organization, which supports both the community and active and non-



active military veterans.

Carl Bell is an active member of the Pinal County Adult Probation Advisory Board (CAB), a local business owner, and commander of the American Legion Post #9. This is the first time business owners, community advisory board members, probation staff, and individuals on probation have joined to give back to the community .

JUVENILE C.A.B. HAS BUSY AGENDA

Debbie Limon-Madrid, Chair of the Pinal County Juvenile Court CAB, reports that the CAB has been busy supporting the efforts of Juvenile Court and the young people we service. "We are gearing up for a busy season of events", according to Limon-Madrid. Some of those activities include:

- ▶ The group will be kicking off the 2nd Annual Character Counts Contest for grades K-12. All schools in Pinal County will be invited to participate in the project that promotes good character.
- ▶ Mock Trial Competition is set for March 2nd at the Pinal County Courthouse. To date, we have 15 teams from 10 schools competing.
- ▶ Scholarship applications are being accepted for seniors wishing to obtain assistance for books and/or tuition.
- ▶ The CAB is taking applications for membership from youth. Six to eight youth will be chosen to assist the CAB and make recommendations to the director and judge.

When Disaster Strikes... Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Even though we live in the Sonoran Desert, desert dwellers may be exposed to winter storms and extreme cold when traveling the high county of the state or when living in the high mountain areas of the county. Here are a few helpful suggestions when faced with this prospect.

To winterize your car, attend to the following:

- Battery and ignition system

should be in top conditions and battery terminals clean.

- Ensure antifreeze levels are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Ensure heater and defroster work properly.
- Check and repair windshield wiper equipment.

During a winter storm:

- Listen to your radio or TV for weather reports and emergency information.
- Eat regularly and drink ample fluids to avoid dehydration, avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters and avoid build-up of toxic fumes.
- Drive only if absolutely necessary.



Domestic Violence Coalition Honors County Management

The Pinal County Domestic Violence Coalition held its 11th annual conference on September 29, 2006, "Serving the Underserved: Victims with Special Needs," with speakers from Arizona, Texas, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. There were close to 150 attendees, and the final speaker was the Honorable William J. O'Neil with a presentation regarding the upcoming rule changes for Orders of Protection.

At the conclusion of the day's events, the Coalition announced its annual awards recognizing those who have made positive, notable contributions toward the work to end domestic vio-

lence. This year the Coalition recognized the **Pinal County Board of Supervisors** and the **Pinal County Manager**. The Coalition noted that they took "the lead in Arizona to see that victims of domestic violence are served and offenders are held accountable," through their support of the grant applications that got the Domestic Violence Court project off the ground, and by approving the first of the positions necessary for the project to achieve sustainability. The award will be presented at the November 8, 2006, Board of Supervisors meeting.



Citizens Committee Makes Final Recommendations for Expansion of Court Facilities

Former Presiding Superior Court Judge William J. O'Neil and Pinal County Supervisor David Snider appointed the Capital Improvement Committee of the Superior Court in Pinal County in the fall of 2005. They serve as Committee Co-Chairs. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a forum for the citizens of Pinal County to contribute to the development of the County's Master Facility Plan, which is being developed by Durrant Architects in collaboration with a local County Facility Master Planning Team. Structured public input was considered crucial to the development of a master facility plan to align the needs of the public served by the courts of Pinal County with the changing nature of the services the courts provide to its customers.

Several important contextual factors were important in the formation of the Committee and the conduct of its work. **First**, Pinal County has experienced significant population growth since 1990. This growth trend is projected to accelerate in the years ahead. **Second**, population is generally highly correlated with the number of case filings in the court system. **Third**, under Article VI, Section 10 of the Arizona Constitution, each superior court is entitled to one superior court judge and one additional judge for every 30,000 county residents or majority frac-

tion thereof. **Fourth**, with few exceptions, namely juvenile and adult probation services, Family Services, and the Clerk of Court, Superior Court operations are currently consolidated in the county seat of Florence. And Finally, in the last several decades there has



been a dramatic shift in the way courts conduct business and deliver services across the nation .

Having reviewed and discussed the information, the Committee agreed early in the process that decentralization of Superior Court services in some form should occur in the future. The Committee recognized that only through a decentralized model will services be

conveniently offered to the public. The Committee's recommendations include:

- * Centralize all Superior Court administrative functions at the Florence complex.
- * Centralize all civil and criminal jury trials of Superior Court at the Florence complex.
- * Centralize all criminal proceedings at the Florence complex, unless and until additional detention facilities are built.
- * Decentralize all non-jury civil functions into satellite complexes.
- * Decentralize all juvenile hearings *not to include* detention /in custody cases.
- * Decentralize non-jury criminal functions to include "specialty court" hearings.
- * Expand court services to the public through extended use of new technology.
- * Co-locate various courts to include Superior and Justice courts into one facility.

About the Court....

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We're on the WEB at

<http://pinal-webster//>

The Superior Court in Pinal County is part of the State's only general jurisdiction court. The Superior Court may hear and decide a large variety of cases of almost any type except small claims, minor offenses and violations of city codes and ordinances. There are two categories of cases heard in Superior Court: criminal and civil. Criminal cases involve a person or entity charged with committing, attempting to commit or engaging in criminal activity to include juvenile matters. Civil cases include all court cases not defined as criminal. They include such matters as disputes between citizens involved in a contractual agreement and tort liability, probate matters, family matters, divorces, etc.

The Superior Court of Pinal County has original jurisdiction of cases and proceedings in which exclusive jurisdiction is not vested by law in another court. The Superior Court in Pinal County is empowered to hear cases of equity and law involving title to, or possession of real property, or the legality of any tax, impost, assessment, toll, or municipal ordinance; civil claims of \$5,000.00 or more; felony prosecutions and misdemeanors, divorce and matters of probate among others. The Superior Court is authorized to act as an appellate court, hearing appeals from decisions made in Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts.

The Superior Court of Pinal County has exclusive and original jurisdiction in all proceedings and matters affecting dependent, neglect, incorrigible and delinquent children under eighteen years of age. Through its probation departments, the Superior Court is responsible for supervising adults and juveniles on probation.



JURY; COMMISSIONER DUTIES; JUROR SELECTION (SEN. C. GRAY)

Authorizes a countywide juror summoning plan to be developed by the Supreme Court. Courts wanting to adopt an alternative plan must submit a summoning plan to the Supreme Court for approval. Alternate procedures for summoning jurors to superior courts with multiple court locations may include dividing counties into jury districts or using a countywide method that minimizes the distance a prospective juror must travel.

SB1055: COURTS; TIME PAYMENT FEE REDUCTION; REPEAL (SEN. HUPPENTHAL)

Repeals laws enacted in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 relating to the time payment fee in criminal cases in order to retain the \$20.00 time payment fee. If no action is taken, the time payment fee will revert to \$12.00 in 2010. Reversion of the time payment fee will result in a 1.2 million per year negative impact on the Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund, compromising automation projects affecting courts in all levels of the court system. (Title 12)

SB1029: EXTREME DUI; .20 CON- CENTRATION ENHANCEMENT (SEN. WARING)

Requires a person convicted of Extreme DUI with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.20 or more to be sentenced to serve not less than

forty-five consecutive days in jail and be ineligible for probation or suspension of execution of sentence unless the entire sentence is served. Requires the person to pay a fine of not less than five hundred dollars and be subject to an ignition interlock device for eighteen months.

SCR1003: JUDICIAL AP- POINTMENTS; SENATE CON- FIRMATION (SEN. HARPER)

Amends Article VI of the Arizona Constitution to grant the Governor the authority to appoint any person of the governor's own choosing to fill judicial vacancies. All appointees are subject to Senate confirmation and must be reconfirmed by the Senate every four years.

SCR1004: JUSTICES AND JUDGES; SENATE CONFIR-

MATION (SEN. HARPER)

Amends Article VI of the Arizona Constitution to grant the Governor the authority to appoint any person of the governor's own choosing to fill judicial vacancies. All appointees are subject to Senate confirmation and retention at the expiration of the term.

SB1034: COMMISSION ON COURT APPOINTMENTS (SEN. HARPER)

Statutory companion to SCR1003 which eliminates the Commission on Appellate Court Appointment and the Commission on Trial Court Appointment