



When I first took office, I immediately worked with my management team to establish a strategic plan to propel the office forward. Together, we developed a plan that focuses on five key strategies - enhanced customer access, greater transparency, excellence in financial reporting, exceptional customer service and community engagement.

*We recently released a Strategic Update to provide customers and stakeholders direct insight into the progression of our 2013 - 2016 strategic plan and the advancement of our services. I encourage you to take a moment to read through the brief report and to provide any feedback you may have on our services. The report is available online at www.polkcountyclerk.net, under the "information & other services" section. I hope you have a wonderful summer. *Stacy**

THE BUTTERFIELD BRIEF

JUNE
2014

Public Access to Online Court Records

Earlier this spring, the Florida Supreme Court issued an administrative order (AOSC14-19) lifting a 10-year moratorium that prevented Clerks from providing public internet access to images of certain court documents. Previously only docket information was publicly available.

What does this mean to you? Your clients who are parties to lawsuits may have online access to read pleadings in their cases, with certain limitations. The general public will be able to view pleadings and records except cases governed by the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, Juvenile Procedure and Probate Rules.

I have established a team to determine how best to implement the order. With numerous technical considerations and a lengthy approval process through the Florida Courts Technology Commission, some of the major issues include standardizing access across all civil and criminal courts and providing a uniform and streamlined method for obtaining records.

Look for more information in the coming months on this initiative. In the interim, the new AO should have no effect on the online access of court records currently available to Florida Bar members.

eFiling for Judges

Starting June 20, Florida judges have the option to eFile orders through the online portal. Judges are not mandated to eFile, but the option is available for those who choose to take advantage of the service.

Jury Status Available Online



The Clerk of Courts office has a new online program to provide residents electronic access to their jury duty status. The service is known as the Jury Application System (JAS).

If an individual requested a postponement or excusal, the status of the request is provided in the "summons history" section. Updates on excusals and postponements are available as the requests are processed.

In addition, potential jurors can use JAS to check if their number is called for jury duty the weekend before their report date. The service also provides details on prior service history and payment status for jury service. Access JAS at www.polkcountyclerk.net/jury-duty.

Legislative Updates

Guardianship Bill The Florida Legislature approved House Bill 635 related to guardianship fraud. The bill allows Florida Clerks to conduct more detailed audits of court-appointed guardianships.

The Polk County Clerk of Courts Inspector General's office audits guardianship cases. The Inspector General conducted 149 guardianship audits in 2013.

Clerk's Bill House Bill 797 cleans up many procedures for Clerks of Court and streamlines many day-to-day duties. Of interest to attorneys is the amendment to section 77.28, Florida Statutes, regarding garnishments. The amendment eliminates the attorney fee payment from being processed through the court, directing the party to pay the garnishee's attorney directly.

Both of these bills benefit our community by better protecting some of our most vulnerable residents and increasing office efficiency. We appreciate the many individuals who worked on these bills.

Polk County Clerk



stacybutterfield@polk-county.net

PH: 863-534-4544

FAX: 863-534-4584

CELL: 863-661-4055