



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

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Pennsylvania Judiciary Launches New Interactive Access to Court Information

HARRISBURG, Aug. 25, 2010—The Pennsylvania Judiciary Web site has expanded its reach to court information and services through a new online feature that makes it easier for the public to interact with the Judiciary.

Starting today, visitors to the Unified Judicial System (UJS) home page at www.pacourts.us can access the new “Public Comments” page by clicking on a specially designated box in the lower right hand corner of the screen. Anyone can go online and report a problem, or submit a comment, about the judicial system and receive a response from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). A mailing address and fax number also are provided as alternative ways to send a message.

The new Comments and Referrals page augments AOPC’s longstanding policy of receiving comments and complaints from the public relating to the Unified Judicial System, in accordance with Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 505(13). Although the UJS Web site already provided a link for submission of public comments and questions, the Public Comments Web page is easier to find and groups it with other related referral information.

“For more than a decade, the state court system has recognized the need and importance of connecting online with the Commonwealth’s citizens,” Court Administrator of Pennsylvania Zygmunt A. Pines said. “The new page improves and expands our accessibility and accountability.”

The single Web page allows users to submit questions and offers a wealth of referral information to those in need of legal assistance or wanting to lodge complaints about judges and attorneys. The AOPC will honor requests to keep submitted comments confidential to the extent possible; however, the substance of the comments may necessitate that the AOPC refer the matter to other entities, as consistent with AOPC’s past practice.

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Web site enhancements are part of the AOPC's role in administering the state court system under the direction of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and its commitment to promoting open access to the courts for the Commonwealth's citizens. Pennsylvania Judiciary's Web site continues to be the primary online source for access to court records, documents and other information. Last year, for example, 26 million Common Pleas and magisterial district court case docket sheets were accessed **at no charge** through the site's Public Web Portal.

Pennsylvania has been a national leader in judicial automation and was the second in the nation to establish a statewide court Web site in 1995. A completely redesigned site was launched in September 2008 to ease navigation and allow users to find information quicker and easier.

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