



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Web Address to Change** **Pennsylvania Courts Launch Redesigned Web Site**

**HARRISBURG, September 22, 2008** - The Pennsylvania court system today launched a completely redesigned Web site aimed at helping the legal profession, the media, law enforcement and, most of all, the public to easily access information from and about the courts.

The new site, coming 13 years after the court system's prototype Web site first went online, is organized to present a wide variety of court data and information to Internet users in a direct and clear manner. Pages are designed with a uniform appearance. Ease of navigation, and a minimum of clutter, is the goal.

"A wealth of information from and about the Pennsylvania courts has been assembled on this Web site," says Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille in his welcome message on the home page of the site. "All our appellate court opinions are here as well as statewide dockets, annual statistical reports, court calendars, news releases and much more. Our goal is to make as much information as possible quickly and easily available. We hope you find the site useful, informative and accessible."

One segment of the new Web site is labeled "For the Public." Another is "For the Media." A third is "For the Legal Profession." Each of these, and other segments, are customized with features aimed to meet the needs and interests of people in those groups.

With the new site, the Web address of Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System also has changed to become more user-friendly: [www.pacourts.us](http://www.pacourts.us).

A major feature of the new site is a refined search capability that enables users to do more precise site searches than in the past. Within the category of appellate court opinions, users also will have a highly useful research device: they will be able to do "content searches" using specific search terms. That capability was not previously available on the old site.

The Web site's home page provides users with direct access to court opinions for the Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth courts as well as direct access to Web docket sheets for appellate courts, criminal courts and magisterial district courts. These are among the most widely sought items of information on the Web site.

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The site also is designed to enable users to easily navigate backward, without having to return to the home page, simply by clicking on a tab for another desired page. These tabs remain in view on the left and at the top of the page at all times.

Pennsylvania courts have been a national leader in statewide judicial automation for two decades. The court system was the second in the nation to establish a statewide Web site in 1995. Planning for the redesigned site has been in the works for more than two years.

"From the earliest days of the World Wide Web, it has been the goal of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and its administrative office to use this great communications vehicle to expand our long-term practice of making public records and information accessible to the public," said Zygmunt A. Pines, Court Administrator of Pennsylvania. "We have met that goal in many ways, such as making criminal dockets available statewide and posting all rulings and opinions of our appellate courts. With the launch of this redesigned Web site, we are now simplifying and enhancing the public's ability to search all information that we make available."

The "For the Public" segment of the site provides a video and a text description of how the Pennsylvania court system is organized, a history of the court system and an explanation of judicial qualifications, election and tenure. The segment also provides lists of all magisterial district judges, Common Pleas Court judges and appellate court judges in the state; access to Web docket sheets; information on lawyer and judicial ethics; frequently used forms and more.

The "For the Media" segment provides news releases, annual reports, statistical reports, lists of judges, bench books, medical malpractice data and more.

The "For the Legal Profession" segment provides court opinions, Web docket sheets, local rules of court, court calendars, information on court interpreters, information on continuing legal education and more.

From its home page, the Web site also provides access to separate pages for the Supreme Court, Superior Court, Commonwealth Court, the Common Pleas courts, the minor courts, the Supreme Court committees and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). The home page also provides direct access to a page for commonly used court forms, a page where court reports are assembled in a central location, an employment page and a site map.

A second phase of the Web redesign, in which additional features to the site are being planned, is currently in progress. One of those features will be a "For the Judiciary" page for use by judges and court personnel.

Anyone with questions or comments about the new Web site can e-mail [aopcweb@pacourts.us](mailto:aopcweb@pacourts.us).

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