AOPC

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

Statewide Criminal Court Computer Systems Installed Throughout PA
Court Computer Systems Unifies Case Processing, Improves Access to Court Data, Aids Law Enforcement

HARRISBURG, February 22, 2007 — Pennsylvania is the largest state in the country to install statewide computer case management systems in all of its criminal trial courts, solidifying its standing as a national leader in judicial automation, the state Supreme Court today announced. The systems improve the overall efficiency of the state's criminal justice system and the management of the courts, while aiding law enforcement through the timely sharing of critical criminal information.

"The ability to quickly access the most current court information throughout the state – information including prior convictions, bail history, pending charges and outstanding warrants – is invaluable to judges, law enforcement officers and other criminal justice agencies," Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy said. "The Court would like to offer a special thank you to Chief Justice Emeritus Stephen A. Zappala for continuing to lead the computerization project for the Court."

The Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System (CPCMS), the latest and largest phase in the automation of Pennsylvania's courts recently was completed with the installment of the system in Philadelphia, the state's largest judicial district. The new system serves:

-- as **a central data warehouse**, enabling, for the first time, staff in 67 Common Pleas Courts to electronically share case information and associated data not only between county courts but also with the state's 548 magisterial district courts and Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth courts.

-- as **a link with Pennsylvania's Criminal Justice Network** – an integrated public safety network developed by the executive branch – to expeditiously exchange critical court information with local, state and federal authorities, as well as executive branch agencies such as the Pennsylvania State Police, and the departments of Transportation and Corrections.

The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) is responsible for the state's judicial automation efforts and works closely with the Criminal Justice Network (JNET) to help achieve its goal of enhancing the safety of our communities through the exchange of information.

Phil Tomassini, Executive Director of JNET, said "Implementation of the Common Pleas Case Management System in all 67 counties of the Commonwealth provides tremendous value to criminal justice and public safety officials throughout the Commonwealth. Through a completely integrated judicial system, authorized JNET users now have access to reliable and accurate court information through one system which has dramatically increased investigators' productivity as well as improving officer safety."

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The state's automation efforts have reduced the need to transfer court data via paper files, thus eliminating delays and the chance that the data would get lost and possibly never forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Moreover, one consistent format for court data makes it easier to transfer quickly and has enabled AOPC and JNET to expeditiously deploy additional applications such as docket sheet information, court calendars and a warrants database to criminal justices users. For example, when a court official logs a warrant on CPCMS in Erie, it can be viewed immediately by court officials in every other county in the state. Within minutes, local, other state and federal law enforcement officials can be alerted of the Erie warrant by accessing the AOPC's warrant database.

Col. Jeffrey B. Miller, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police, said "Judicial automation at the state level has vastly improved our ability to obtain consistent, accurate and detailed court data on a timely basis, aiding in many law enforcement functions. In addition, up-to-date warrant information improves the safety of law enforcement officials, particularly when making an arrest or traffic stop."

Law enforcement officials also can be assisted by the AOPC through its system's data exchange with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, allowing driver's license photos to be printed on warrants for identification purposes. Furthermore, the AOPC provides access to statewide bail information and court history, as well as other online resources that can assist judges when making decisions regarding bail for potentially dangerous defendants.

Benefits to county court users and the public

The AOPC's Common Pleas system also improves court efficiency at the local level, providing docketing, calendaring, accounting, collection, payment and a wide variety of other court functions for judges and their staffs, clerks of court and county court administration staff. The system's "event-next event concept," for example, is a sophisticated work-flow feature that can be customized by county staff to help them manage caseloads by anticipating upcoming case events. Its scheduling function provides schedules for judges, attorneys and law enforcement officers to assist court administrators in planning for hearings and trials. County court staffs no longer have to manually complete docket and statistical reports for the AOPC. CPCMS eliminates the need for county staff to complete docket transcripts and statistical reports, and can reduce redundant data entry by electronically transferring charge information to and from county district attorney offices. *(see attached list of additional CPCMS benefits)*

CPCMS also helps victims who benefit from its uniform disbursement schedule that enforces the high priority of payments to victims required by law and provides data to the Crime Victims' Compensation Board within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

The system has 8,100 users with read and write capabilities. Another 4,300 local judicial staff, criminal justice partners and law enforcement officials have the ability to view "secure," or more detailed, court case docket sheets on the AOPC's Web portal, accessed through passwords. Secure Web docket sheets are also made available through JNET to additional users who belong to JNET's criminal history or criminal justice security groups. Anyone with Internet access can log on to ujsportal.pacourts.us to view "public" Web docket sheets from the magisterial district, criminal Common Pleas and appellate courts at no cost.

The Common Pleas Case Management System development and implementation process

"Integrating 60 judicial districts, or essentially 60 different court systems, into one case management system was a monumental job," said Court Administrator of Pennsylvania Zygmont A. Pines, Esq. "Our users and staff experienced and overcame predictable challenges that were to be expected in a system deployment of this scope. I am especially grateful, for the patience and persistence of our staff and the counties' clerks of courts as we struggled to overcome obstacles and find solutions."

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As the counties came onto the system between 2003 and 2006 the benefits, of sharing court information were quick to follow. "Midway through the deployment of the system we began receiving reports of county officials who had apprehended individuals who came into their office to pay court costs while having an open warrant in another county" Pines said. "It was evident that the system, with its 'outstanding warrant' flag posted on computer screens, was making it increasingly more difficult for individuals with outstanding warrants to move from county courthouse to county courthouse and avoid notice. The ability of county court staff and others to identify more individuals with outstanding warrants should result in more warrants served and more fines, fees, costs and restitution being paid to crime victims, counties and municipalities."

CPCMS is comprehensive yet flexible. During its development, the AOPC staff, in consultation with county staff in joint application design meetings, identified common system requirements and those unique to the counties' court operations and developed customized functions, when possible, to facilitate traditional practices in the counties. In addition, the AOPC staff has developed nearly 440 reports, forms and court documents to meet various county reporting needs, and staff continues to add additional reports as the need arises. Today users run approximately 14,000 of these reports daily.

The AOPC provided extensive training for county users as part of the county-by-county implementation process. Most system users received training prior to each county's "go-live" date and the AOPC continues to provide ongoing training for current and new county employees, and operates a toll-free Help Desk for county users. Some smaller counties had at least two trainers on-site for at least four weeks. Larger counties had more trainers on-site for longer periods of time. Philadelphia, for example, had 10 trainers on-site for more than 16 weeks of training before going live on CPCMS and many staff remained on site through December to assist the Philadelphia staff with post-CPCMS implementation issues.

"The amount of court data transferred to CPCMS from literally hundreds of different county court systems is staggering," Pines said. "Information regarding more than 5.6 million existing court cases was transferred to the statewide system. Although cases dating back to the 1970s can be found on CPCMS, transferred case information typically dates back 10 to 15 years or to the time when the county first computerized its courts operations." *(see attached county-by-county case transfer chart)* AOPC officials estimate that more than four million new cases will be docketed in both the Common Pleas and the magisterial judge case management systems in 2007.

The CPCMS project included the purchase and installation of more than 800 computers and more than 480 printers in the state's 67 counties at the cost of $4.6 million. "Remarkably," Pines added, "one county had no computers and operated strictly with paper files at the time the system was implemented!"

CPCMS computer hardware/software

CPCMS is a four-tiered client/server, windows based application distributed using Citrix XP. The user screens were developed using Visual Basic.NET. One of the system's middle tiers was developed in Java, utilizing Sybase's EA Server platform and a Sybase ASE Database. There is also a Crystal Enterprise tier used to generate the more than 400 different forms and reports that can be run by CPCMS users.

History of Pennsylvania's judicial automation

Statewide judicial automation began in the 1980s under the direction of Chief Justice Emeritus Stephen A. Zappala. Since the inception of the first phase of the overall judicial computer project, the AOPC has broken new ground while developing three major statewide case management systems to date: the Magisterial District Judge System, completed in 1992; the Pennsylvania Appellate Court Case Management System, completed in 2000; and the newly-completed Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System. The judicial automation projects are funded primarily by a portion of annual court costs, fines and fees.

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Benefits of Statewide Judicial Automation

The CPCMS project shares information with the Magisterial District Judge System and the Appellate Court System through a data hub. For the first time, all the levels of Pennsylvania's courts can exchange information. Criminal and appellate court case information is available via the Internet at no cost to the counties, the public or the agencies that access the information. Possibilities for further data sharing exist as AOPC projects move forward. The following is a list of some of the many benefits currently being realized:

- Court personnel, law enforcement and other **JNET** users are able to search for, view and run reports on warrants locally or throughout the state from both the common pleas and the magisterial district judge courts.

- Court staff can record defendants' aliases and identifiers such as scars, marks or tattoos.

- Inmate location records from the state **Department of Corrections** and some county prisons are provided to assist sheriffs' offices with inmate transportation and court scheduling.

- Traffic conviction data is electronically transferred to **PennDOT**, streamlining the process of imposing drivers' licenses penalties.

- CPCMS saves tax dollars by significantly reducing the time needed for staff at the **State Department of Auditor General** to perform court audits.

- Court collection and disbursement data is reported electronically to the **Department of Revenue**.

- CPCMS shares information with the **Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing** to provide case data to populate its system, which judges can use to determine sentencing guidelines.

- CPCMS and MDJS provide a variety of automated accounting functions, some of which reduce errors in clerks of courts offices and magisterial district judge courts.

- The Public Web portal reduces the requests for information to clerk of court offices by allowing the public and others to access case dockets sheets online.

- The CPCMS calendaring function assists public defenders, attorneys and others in by providing court schedules online.

- Most CPCMS users and secure docket sheet users are able to access statewide case information rather than inquiring county by county. These users also have access to and can review Case Accounting Reports, Court Summary Reports and Calendar Schedules through the secure portal Web site.

- Tracking for trial date rules is available to assist **district attorneys' offices** in meeting deadlines for defendants' rights to a speedy trial.

- Application support, user licenses and maintenance costs are paid for by the AOPC rather than by the local courts. The AOPC also provides technical staff for maintaining the application and the network, staff training, helpdesk services, and other user support at no cost to the counties.

  Note: the AOPC's systems have safeguards in place to prevent public access to sensitive information. The systems also have a sophisticated audit trail of every user action that adds or modifies data and an off-site backup system to ensure data recovery in the event of a disaster.

CPCMS County Go-Live Dates & General Migrated Data Stats

County Name	County Go-Live Date	Number of Cases Migrated	Year of Oldest Cases Migrated	Number of Users
Adams	November 22, 2004	18,632	1952	51
Allegheny	February 28, 2006	611,151	1974	274
Armstrong	January 12, 2004	16,974	1973	36
Beaver	February 9, 2004	63,359	1958	101
Bedford	March 8, 2004	5,373	1981	24
Berks	June 6, 2005	122,703	1967	180
Blair	September 19, 2005	55,426	1989	88
Bradford	July 5, 2005	15,876	1984	50
Bucks	January 3, 2006	164,341	1984	274
Butler	February 17, 2004	43,332	1964	71
Cambria	March 15, 2004	34,911	1963	74
Cameron	March 29, 2004	*No Data to Migrate - 0*	1991	7
Carbon	August 22, 2005	19,382	1986	46
Centre	March 28, 2005	10,500	1979	77
Chester	February 6, 2006	118,179	1978	129
Clarion	January 12, 2004	10,578	1983	17
Clearfield	November 7, 2005	27,297	1990	51
Clinton	August 1, 2005	6,055	1992	20
Columbia	August 15, 2005	15,731	1991	21
Crawford	January 26, 2004	9,427	1981	64
Cumberland	November 17, 2003	40,627	1972	84
Dauphin	October 11, 2005	152,596	1971	108
Delaware	December 19, 2005	178,957	1974	234
Elk	March 15, 2004	3,422	1981	26
Erie	August 1, 2005	61,667	1989	134
Fayette	February 23, 2004	34,341	1975	30
Forest	March 22, 2004	1,336	1985	10
Franklin	October 3, 2005	29,974	1990	85
Fulton	September 6, 2005	2,845	1994	27
Greene	January 20, 2004	8,737	1974	27
Huntingdon	October 24, 2005	10,418	1992	15
Indiana	February 2, 2004	17,651	1975	44
Jefferson	February 23, 2004	9,844	1973	20
Juniata	February 28, 2005	4,349	1975	11
Lackawanna	January 24, 2005	32,756	1982	82
Lancaster	May 16, 2005	143,795	1977	153
Lawrence	February 2, 2004	23,339	1968	79
Lebanon	February 22, 2005	36,376	1967	75
Lehigh	July 25, 2005	172,960	1981	358
Luzerne	December 5, 2005	87,037	1989	158
Lycoming	February 22, 2005	47,540	1968	66
McKean	February 23, 2004	8,793	1994	27
Mercer	January 18, 2005	25,958	1972	57
Mifflin	January 18, 2005	8,687	1986	37
Monroe	April 25, 2005	25,231	1972	66
Montgomery	April 4, 2005	194,058	1979	251
Montour	August 29, 2005	4,661	1992	28
Northampton	October 17, 2005	37,470	1995	71
Northumberland	July 25, 2005	16,618	1983	44
Perry	April 4, 2005	4,137	1975	16
Philadelphia	September 18, 2006	2,413,888	1968	2888
Pike	September 12, 2005	6,933	1993	34
Potter	May 23, 2005	4,580	1992	18
Schuylkill	January 24, 2005	46,236	1974	120
Snyder	June 6, 2005	4,563	1970	20
Somerset	September 6, 2005	13,969	1990	59
Sullivan	May 23, 2005	905	1999	7
Susquehanna	November 14, 2005	8,836	1994	28
Tioga	February 28, 2005	5,859	1975	43
Union	May 9, 2005	7,757	1983	24
Venango	March 1, 2004	14,067	1975	38
Warren	March 1, 2004	2,144	1999	14
Washington	June 20, 2005	57,548	1966	88
Wayne	June 20, 2005	11,121	1995	35
Westmoreland	December 8, 2003	71,057	1971	280
Wyoming	April 18, 2005	7,560	1975	20
York	November 28, 2004	132,583	1969	298
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