

COURTIDE

A PUBLICATION OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

3RD QUARTER 1997

VOL. 3 ISSUE No. 3

COURT ADMINISTRATION RECEIVES SJI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

The Office of the Court Administrator has been awarded a Technical Assistance Grant of \$30,000 by the State Justice Institute (SJI). The funds will provide for two expert consultants, Mr. Chang-Ming Yeh of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and Mr. Wayne Drummond, Dean of the College of Architecture of the University of Florida, to produce standards and guidelines for courthouse construction in the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

The request for funds was made as the Eighth Judicial Circuit faces critical cross-roads in all six counties during the next five to ten years as space planning of new and renovated facilities must be confronted. The building dates of current facilities range from the late 1920's to the 1970's and most of the courthouses within the circuit face the prospect of renovation. While elaborate standards exist which guide the construction of federal courthouse facilities and many other state facilities, there are no current guidelines or standards for state courthouse design in Florida.

This 12 month study which begins this summer coincides with current court facilities projects underway throughout the circuit. Most noteworthy is the project in Baker County whose commission is under court order to renovate existing court facilities. The state has assured \$1.5 million to assist with construction of a new wing and the architect working on the design has recently submitted an application for a historical grant totaling \$477,750.

STATE LEGISLATURE ALLOCATES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS TO EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

For the first time the State Legislature has allocated funds for local county courthouse improvements. During this session, the legislature has set aside a total of \$3 million for small counties statewide, \$2.3 million (79%) of which will be allocated to the Eighth Judicial Circuit. Baker County is due to receive the largest portion of the funds (\$1.572 million), Union County will receive \$540,000, and Bradford and Gilchrist counties anticipate \$225,000 and \$40,500, respectively.

This appropriation is subject to the Governor's veto, however, this last action is not expected. It is important to recognize the efforts of our legislative delegation in obtaining these allocations, without the help of Representative Crady, Senator Kirkpatrick and Senator Williams, this initiative would not have been successful.



Shown above is one of the two mediation billboards funded by the North Central Florida Mediation Council and from grant monies from the State of Florida Dispute Resolution Center dedicated to increasing mediation use and awareness in the rural counties of the Eighth Judicial Circuit. The billboards are located in both Levy and Union counties.

EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IMPACTS STATE LEGISLATION

The Director of the state Dispute Resolution Center, Sharon Press, credits the work of the Domestic Violence Limited Mediation Protocol developed in our circuit with positively influencing state legislation. Our Domestic Violence Limited Mediation Protocol was developed collaboratively by Judge Giunta, the Family Mediation Program, Clerk of Court staff, Guardian ad Litem, and SPARC. The following statement is from Sharon Press:

“During the 1997 Legislative Session, the governor’s Task Force on Domestic Violence introduced an amendment to Chapter 44 (governing court-ordered mediation) which would have restricted the referral of family cases to mediation if there was ‘a history of domestic violence.’ In large measure, due to the excellent reputation and work of the Domestic Violence Limited Mediation Protocol, a compromise was reached between the Task Force and the Dispute Resolution Center/Office of the State Courts Administrator to restrict referrals to those cases in which there was ‘a history of domestic violence which would compromise the mediation process,’ upon motion or request of a party. The collaborative work which has been done between the mediation program in Alachua County and the domestic violence community is an inspiration for the kind of productive relationship which can develop to assist victims of abuse. Congratulations again on your fine work in this area and many thanks for your assistance during the session.”

There have been 224 family mediations in the entire circuit from January 1 through June 30, 1997, 188 of which were settled.



Courtside is a quarterly publication of the:

Eighth Judicial Circuit
Court Administrator’s Office
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ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS

7.500(E) Traffic Infraction Costs Where No Hearing is Held: In addition to penalties and other allowable costs, the following costs shall be assessed and collected by the traffic violations bureau:

- A. \$3.00 for pedestrian infractions
- B. \$6.00 for non-moving traffic infractions
- C. \$10.00 for moving traffic violations

All current administrative orders are available on the internet at <http://www.co.alachua.fl.us/~ctadmin>, or they can be purchased on diskette for \$10.00 from the Law Library. Contact **Doris Morgan** 374-3659.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM

A MESSAGE FROM MAG MCGAULEY

The staff and volunteers have been busy the past several months. In May we trained 39 new volunteers for dependency and delinquency cases, and 10 volunteers took the family law training. Currently the Guardian ad Litem Program volunteers are representing 767 children throughout the Eighth Circuit. Nancy Dean and Lisa Rodgers have joined our secretarial support staff. Nancy is in Gilchrist County and Lisa is in Bradford County.

This summer some of our guardians, in cooperation with our non-profit organization, the Guardian Foundation, Inc., are creating "back to school" school supply packets for our GAL-represented children who are in foster care or relative placements. This project will meet the needs of many children whose caretakers struggle to prepare them for the new school year, but, more importantly, the children will feel proud and prepared as they begin school in August.

PROJECT PAYBACK BEGINS

The Eighth Judicial Circuit has implemented a new early intervention program called *Project Payback*. This program is a juvenile restitution demonstration that is designed to teach 14-17 year old nonviolent juveniles job search and employment skills through the Florida Jobs and Benefits Center. The juveniles are then placed in positions at participating businesses in the community to work off their debt. The program aims to decrease juvenile recidivism through accountability and employment, and to increase restitution compensation to victims. For more information on the program, please contact Valerie Varan, Program Manager, at (352) 337-6174.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Court Administrator's Office welcomes **Lisa Gonzalez**, staff assistant for Project Payback and **April Kirch**, mediation program assistant.

Congratulations to **Vicki Johnson** who has been nominated by the Florida Court Reporters Association for the position of Central Director.

A new general assignments order for July 1, 1997 through December 1, 1997 has been signed. Judge Cates will now handle Baker and Marchman Acts for Alachua County and Judge Turner will handle NFETC hearings and Juvenile Dependency for Alachua County.

Thank you to all the judicial assistants and staff who contributed to the JA seminar "Dealing with the Judges Office" held on May 6. The seminar was a success and we received wonderful feedback from the legal community. The "deskbook" that was distributed at the seminar is now available on the internet:

<http://www.co.alachua.fl.us/~ctadmin>.

Our website is expanding! Take a look at the new family section where you will find a self-help divorce planner for pro se litigants.

NEWS FROM COUNTY MEDIATION

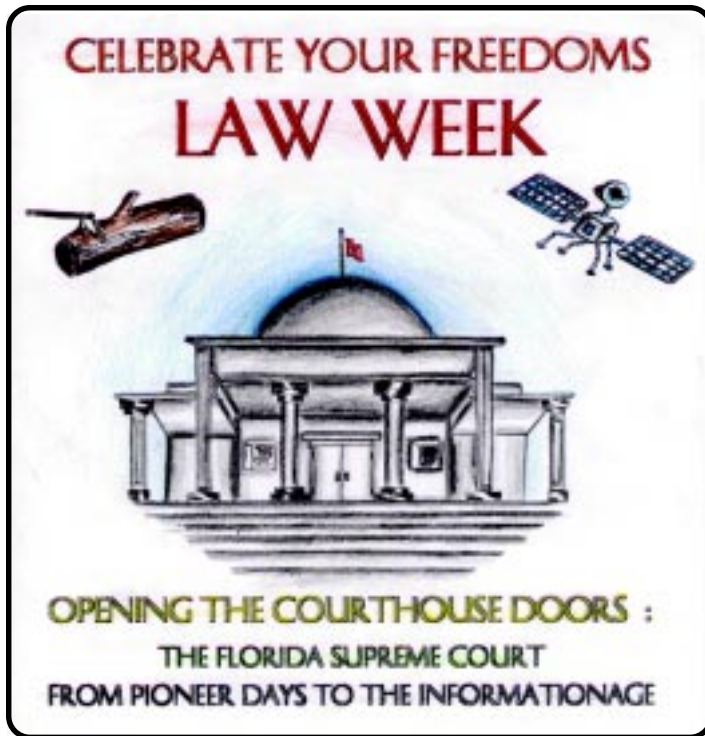
The County Mediation Program has seen much positive growth and change this year. During the first five months of 1997, the number of small claims cases filed in Alachua County grew more than 22 percent, compared with 1996. More than 25 dedicated volunteer mediators help handle the corresponding increase in the small claims mediation case load. In addition, Alachua County volunteers continue to mediate small claims cases in Bradford and Levy Counties. Beginning July, 1997, volunteers will also mediate small claims cases in Baker, Gilchrist, and Union Counties. A mediation training to expand the volunteer pool to include residents of Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, and Union Counties is planned for September.

Parties to mediation overwhelmingly support the process. Based on partial results of evaluations from parties, eighty-seven percent indicate that they would want to mediate again if they become involved in a dispute in the future. 10% did not respond or were unsure, and only 3% said they would not want to mediate again.

The only place you find success before work is in the dictionary.

May V. Smith

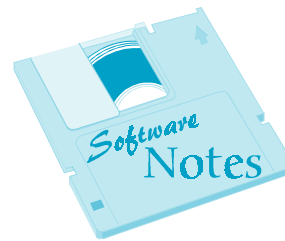
LAW WEEK POSTER CONTEST



Wade Milam, a Buchholz High School student, won first-place in the high school division of the state-wide poster contest implemented to commemorate Law Week and the Sesquicentennial of the Florida Supreme Court. Entries were judged on creativity, originality, and adherence to the theme "Opening the Courthouse Doors: The Florida Supreme Court From Pioneers Days To the Information Age". The five state winners, their teachers and parents travelled to Tallahassee during Law Week for a public celebration and recognition ceremony.

ALACHUA COUNTY 1997/1998 TENTATIVE BUDGET INCLUDES...

The Board of County Commissioners has **tentatively** approved several budget requests made by Court Administration for fiscal year 1997/98. Among the requests approved is an additional full-time Information Systems Analyst, \$30,000 for library windows, \$140,000 for a courthouse chiller, \$50,000 for courthouse rest room repairs, \$100,000 for security, \$200,000 for renovation to the 2nd and 4th floors, and \$400,000 for space needs implementation. No changes are anticipated, however, these fund allocations may be modified prior to the release of the final budget on August 24.



Shortcuts for typing long names in WordPerfect 6.1: The Find and Replace method is most efficient.

For each occurrence of a long name, type an abbreviation. When you have finished typing, set the insertion point at the place to begin searching. Use Edit/Find and Replace (F2) to find your abbreviation and replace it with the full name.



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