



The Circuit Times

Newsletter of Twentieth Judicial Circuit

Volume 2

Summer 2009

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What's Coming...

Reminder from HR

Lee County Justice Center Tower Expansion Completed Opening Ceremony Held on Law Day 2009

On May 1, 2009, Law Day, the Lee County Justice Center held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the new Tower facility. The finished project provides for 17 additional courtrooms, 22 judicial chambers, a media room, specialty courtroom for Dependency Court, a secured parking area and ample space for attorney meeting rooms, jury rooms and inmate holding cells. Construction on the expansion began four years ago.

The ceremony was attended by judges, county commissioners, city council members, AOC staff, law enforcement, members of the media and the public. County Commissioners Brian Bigelow, Tammy Hall and Ray Judah addressed the attendees as did Chief Judge G. Keith Cary, State Attorney Stephen Russell and Public Defender Kathleen Smith.

The Court began relocating judges to the 10 story building in May and it was open for court business on June 1, 2009.



Ribbon cutting marking the opening of the Tower. In attendance were County Commissioners, City Council members, PD, SAO, law enforcement and judges.



Above, from left to right: Commissioners Ray Judah, Tammy Hall and Brian Bigelow present a certificate commemorating the opening of the Justice Center Tower to Chief Judge Cary.

The primary entrance for the Lee County Justice Center Campus is now located at the Tower building on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. side. A convenient bus stop with covered seating is located at this entrance as well. However, the public may still enter the campus from the Monroe Street entrance of the Lee County Justice Center.

The space vacated by the judges in the Justice Center will be renovated to accommodate growth needs in Family Court Services, Probation and Pretrial Services. Additionally, the Clerk's Office and the Court Operations Division/Bailiffs will have more space dedicated for their needs.

Lee County Pretrial Services Department Receives Accreditation



Criminal Division Director Scott Wilsker (left) with Deputy Criminal Division Director over Pretrial Services Liza Maldonado (ctr) and Accreditation Manager Amy Kinsey.

After almost three years of hard work the efforts of the Lee County Pretrial Services Department have paid off: It was awarded accreditation by the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC) on June 30, 2009. Pretrial Services has the distinction of being only the fourth such pretrial program in the state of Florida to receive this accreditation.

Chief Judge G. Keith Cary along with Pretrial Services supervisors and staff attended the final phase of accreditation- a question and answer review by the Board of FCAC- before receiving accreditation. According to Deputy Criminal Division Director, Liza Maldonado, the accreditation effort was lead by Accreditation Manager Amy Kinsey who oversaw the process, but, "everyone worked together to make it happen...there was complete 'buy-in' from the support staff to the supervisors". Indeed, the on-site assessment team noted that "It was clear to the team that accreditation is part of the culture of the agency for all of the employees of the Lee County Pretrial Services... throughout the chain of command, a commitment to the process was clearly evident."

The assessment team, Sgt. Pashence-Day of the Sumpter County Sheriff's Office and Shirley Olson, Criminal Court Services Manager with Volusia County Court Administration, spent two days interviewing officers and supervisors and observing pretrial operations. The final assessment indicated that the "Lee County Pretrial Services Department is 100% in compliance with applicable mandatory standards and four of six optional standards."

Accreditation means that Pretrial Services upholds the highest standards of best practices that increase accountability for the department and uniformity within release programs. Also, it affords a higher measure of confidence for those involved in the criminal justice system.

The accreditation is for a three year period, at which time it will need to be renewed, thus ensuring continued self-evaluation and commitment to excellence.

Charlotte County

Crisis Intervention Training Class Graduated in May

by Sherry Munroe, Pretrial Services Supervisor

Administrative Office of the Courts staff Jon Embury and Sherry Munroe, as well as, Judge Peter Bell all members of the Charlotte County Criminal Justice Behavioral Health Advisory Council (CJBHAC) are celebrating Charlotte County's first Crisis Intervention Training class (CIT) to graduate.

In 2008 the CJBHAC was tasked with creating a strategic plan for diversion programs in Charlotte County, following money received by the county from the Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant. At the beginning of the grant period the CJBHAC developed a System Map of existing services, then prioritized a list of strategies including community education, discharge planning, service expansion, cross-agency communication, and data collections. To date, all of the objectives of the original work plan have been completed.

Crisis Intervention Training also was a part of the work plan. CIT consists of: recognizing the symptoms of

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Glades County

Magistrate Helping Out in Glades County

Magistrate Lisa Porter began assisting Glades County Judge Jack Lundy on July 15, 2009. Magistrate Porter will be hearing summary judgments on foreclosures one day a month thus allowing Judge Lundy more time to complete work in chambers.

Hendry County

Teen Court to Resume in Fall 2009

After a long sabbatical, the Teen Court Program will resume in Hendry County this fall. Court will “come to order” on Tuesday, September 15, 2009. A training and orientation will be conducted the week prior.

The Honorable James D. Sloan will preside over this long forgotten but much needed court that ceased to exist in 2003 when funding for a grant position that coordinated this program was discontinued. However, Hendry County agreed to fund the position with dedicated money beginning fiscal year 2008-09.



County Court Judge James D. Sloan, Hendry County

The newest addition to AOC staff in Hendry County, Marcia Salmon, is the Teen Court/Drug Court/Juvenile Arbitration Coordinator. Ms. Salmon has been working hand-in-hand with Judge Sloan to revive the Teen Court Program. There will be two semesters of Teen Court to coincide with the school calendar and ending for the year on May 18, 2010 with an awards ceremony.

Teen Court is an alternative to more formal prosecution of juvenile offenses. The purpose is to divert less serious offenses from the Juvenile Court thus allowing additional time for more serious cases to be addressed. Defendants in Teen Court must admit their guilt, explain their involvement in the offenses, and are evaluated and judged by a jury of their peers. The Teen Court jury determines the sentences which include at a minimum community service and jury duty assignment. The defendants are obligated to complete their sentences or the cases are referred back to the State Attorney's Office for further action.

Teen Court affords juveniles the opportunity to accept responsibility for their actions and face the consequences as deemed appropriate by their peers. Also, it affords the court system flexibility in how to address juvenile offenses.

Volunteers are being sought currently to prepare for the upcoming dockets. If you are interested you may contact Marcia Salmon at 863-612-4720.

Lee County

Chief Deputy Court Administrator Receives Fellowship Grant

Lisa Kiesel, Chief Deputy Court Administrator (*right*) was awarded the Institute for Court Management Fellowship Grant from the National Association of Court Management. The grant enabled Ms. Kiesel to participate in the three week long intensive Court Executive Development Program (CEDP) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) designed to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of qualified court managers. Ms. Kiesel was selected from a pool of 30 possible applicants vying for the grant.



In November 2007 Ms. Kiesel was one of fifteen managers in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit to graduate from the Court Management Program through NCSC's Institute for Court Management Program. That coursework laid the foundation for her attendance in this high level program which will culminate with a formal presentation of her findings at the conclusion of a year long research project.

In addition to receiving the fellowship grant, Ms. Kiesel was awarded a scholarship from the State Justice Institute to offset the tuition costs for this program.

Probation Officer Recognized by Chief Judge and Court Administrator



Chief Judge Cary (lt), Probation Ofc. Oscar Ferrar, Rick Callanan, TCA (rt).

On May 21, 2009, Probation Officer Oscar Ferrar was acknowledged for his “extraordinary impact on the lives of the citizens of Lee County” as a probation officer. Chief Judge G. Keith Cary and Trial Court Administrator Rick Callanan presented Officer Ferrar with a plaque recognizing his efforts that go “above and beyond” in dealing with his probationers.

Recently, Officer Ferrar was the subject of a letter submitted to his supervisor, Jeff Nichols. The letter was from a parent of a probationer who had passed away due to his drug addiction. The letter applauded Mr. Ferrar for his support of her son and her as the probationer battled his addiction. According to Criminal Division Director Scott Wilsker, Mr. Ferrar has "exemplary dedication to the vision of the Lee County Probation Department" and that he deserved recognition for his work as an employee of the Administrative Office of the Court.

Mr. Ferrar has been an employee of the AOC since January of 2002. During this time he has served as both a Pretrial Officer and a Probation Officer. His work has always been an example of the high standards achieved by the AOC staff.

20th Judicial Circuit Hosts Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

by Bruce Waddell,

On Thursday, May 7, 2009, the Lee County Arbitration/Mediation Advisory Board and Judiciary of the 20th Judicial Circuit sponsored the 19th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. The event was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Ft. Myers and was attended by approximately 120 individuals. Those in attendance included volunteer mediators, volunteer juvenile arbitrators, judges, guests and staff.



Bruce Waddell with opening remarks at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Awards for five, ten and fifteen years of volunteer service were given to both volunteer mediators and juvenile arbitrators. Ten individuals were feted for their dedication to assisting their fellow citizens and the court system. Lee County Administrative Judge John Duryea and County Judge Rad Sturgis addressed the gathering and expressed their appreciation for the excellent efforts put forth by all those who volunteer their time and energy.

Volunteers had the opportunity to share one story from their work that made a lasting impression upon them. Individual judges shared comments as to how these volunteers helped the courts tremendously. The volunteers all expressed their sincere gratitude for the recognition they received.

Funding for the event was provided through generous donations to the Advisory Board by the judiciary, law firms and individual mediators. Without that support the event would not take place.

Below: Robert Glancy and Luanne Wolff, Charlotte County Family Court Services (left and middle) with volunteer mediator.



Court Volunteer Program Gets Underway

Lee County began a full court press on developing a Court Volunteer Program in January 2009. With the Tower expansion due to be completed the operations staff recognized that volunteers would be needed in order to assist the public with changing courtrooms and an additional 165,000 sq. feet of space. In total the courthouse complex has three buildings on one campus, plus a satellite building a block away.

Dolly Ballard, Court Operations Manager and Roseann Brown, Court Program Specialist drafted brochures, press releases and applications to get the process going in January. February thru May they identified free sources of advertisement, spoke to groups like Lee Grows and volunteer mediators/arbitrators, created volunteer packets, processed application packets, conducted background screens and completed a schedule for June 2009.

By June 1st, opening business day for the Tower, there were 25 volunteers in the Court Volunteer Program. There are currently four new volunteers in the process of training and interviews are scheduled with five more applicants.

The Court Volunteers help the public navigate through the court complex by giving directions, identifying courtrooms and answering general questions about the courthouse facilities. There are three information desks manned by the volunteers from 7:30am to 3:30pm, Monday thru Friday. The main desk is at the entrance of the Tower; the

Charlotte CIT cont. from p.2

mental illness and co-occurring disorders; how to de-escalate crises; jail diversion options; how to problem solve within the treatment system; follow-up steps; and where to take consumers. The training is a 40-hour intensive program conducted by a variety of community service providers as well as prior trained CIT officers and deputies.

On May 1, 2009 the CBJHAC had its first graduating class. Judge Peter Bell addressed the group of graduates stating: "CIT is part of a 'continuum of care' for those suffering with a mental illness. When the CJBHAC met in 2008 to evaluate the state of mental health services and programs in Charlotte County for people involved with the criminal justice system, many areas were identified as needing to be addressed. CIT was one of them. Now, approximately a year later, CIT is a success for the CJBHAC...as we, citizens of Charlotte County, attempt to help our neighbors learn to cope with a mental illness and, none-the-less, become productive members of the community."

The Administrative Office of the Courts hopes to have members of its staff participate in the training soon.

Collier County

Nine Probation Officers Graduate from CIT

The Collier County Probation Department has been in the process of having its officers trained in crisis intervention to provide them with more tools with which to handle individuals with mental health issues. As of June 2009, nine officers have completed the intensive 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) class. They are: Gina Dake, Charles Crews, Kerri Hixson, Chris Wilkinson, Debbie Offutt, Greg Pellechia, Lance Hendrix, Danny Hornbeck and Ashlee Jablonski. The training was conducted by the Collier County Sheriff's Department and sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Crisis Intervention Training helps communities manage mental health crisis issues in a safe way. It is the result of a tragic ending to a law enforcement situation in Memphis, Tennessee when in 1988 a young man with a history of mental illness was killed by the police. Known as the "Memphis Model" CIT provides law enforcement with quality mental health training in order to avoid unsuccessful and sometimes fatal outcomes.

The Collier County Probation Department hopes to have all its officers complete the specialized training within the next year.

Courthouse Annex Opened for Business

by Mark Middlebrook, ASM

The Collier County Courthouse Annex opened on June 15, 2009. By unanimous vote the Collier County Board of County Commissioners have decided to name the building the Hugh D. Hayes Courthouse Annex after resident circuit judge and former Chief Judge, Hugh Hayes.

Construction began on the building which mirrors the courthouse in size and exterior in early 2007. The offices of the State Attorney and Public Defender are now housed in the annex and the Clerk of Courts will be moved into the facility and operational by the first week of August.

Thereafter, the vacated space in the courthouse will be retrofitted into courtrooms, judicial chambers and office space.

Probation Officer Teaches Self-Defense to Young Girls

by Chuck Rice, Criminal Division Director

Probation Officer Kerri Hixson (*right*) participated in the *13th Annual Reach for Your Dreams Conference* in May 2009.



The focus of the conference is aimed at empowering girls by promoting self-esteem and goal setting. Ms. Hixson presented a women's self-defense class, sending the message that girls are worth defending. And demonstrating that woman can be strong, confident and self-protective.

Attendees at the event were 100 at-risk girls from the alternative schools Teenage Parenting Program and the Pace Center.

Officer Hixson is trained in Capoeira Karate which she studied when living in Miami. In 2001 when she relocated to Collier County, she began training in GoJu Ryu Karate and currently holds a blue belt in this style.

Volunteer cont. from p.4

second desk is located across from the elevators on the Monroe Street side of the Lee County Justice Center; and, the third desk is located on the fourth floor of the Lee County Justice Center.

Volunteers are still being sought. If you are interested please contact Roseann Brown at 239-533-2885. For additional information go to www.ca.cjis20.org and click on Volunteer Program.

The Human Resource FYI

20th Provides Diversity Training

by Manny Thomas, HR Analyst

The third annual diversity training was held on June 29, 30 and July 1, 2009. This year the training "Exploring Dimensions of Diversity" focused on two dimensions: generational differences and differences in abilities. It consisted of a dynamic three and a half hour interactive workshop offered in Collier, Lee and Charlotte Counties. Senior Consultant and Facilitator, Kelly Thayer of Prism International, facilitated the training of our 240 participants comprised mainly of AOC staff and judicial assistants. Ms. Thayer specializes in managing diversity.

The Twentieth Judicial Circuit recognizes that its workforce and the public it serves are becoming increasingly more diverse and complex. Consequently, it is important to create an inclusive environment that will help develop and appreciate each individual's skills, abilities and experiences.

Coming Up...

ATTENTION STATE EMPLOYEES

Open Enrollment for pre-tax benefits begins September 14, 2009. This is our opportunity to change or amend your benefits. Enrollment packets will be mailed to your home address. For more information you can go to www.myflorida.com/MyBenefits/ and click on "Open Enrollment for the 2010 Plan Year", or, you can contact the Human Resources Department at 239-533-1705.

Reminder:

The flu is going around and it is not going away. The best way to avoid getting sick is to frequently wash hands and use hand sanitizer when washing is not an option. AND, if you get sick stay home. This will go a long way in preventing the spread of the flu.

Circuit Times Newsletter

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Check out our website at www.ca.cjis20.org for information on court activities, calendars and more.