

## Court Information Release



United States District Court  
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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### **CHIEF JUDGE JAMES F. HOLDERMAN GIVES ANNUAL “STATE OF THE COURT” ADDRESS**

CHICAGO – After asking for a moment of silence in memory of departed Judge William J. Hibbler, who died on March 19, Chief Judge Holderman said that except for the loss of Judge Hibbler the state of the court was, in a word, “good” and reported the following:

The district court currently has five judicial vacancies, but two will soon be filled. The Senate on May 7 confirmed John Z. Lee and on May 14 confirmed John J. Tharp as district judges. They both hope to join the court within the next several weeks. No nominations have been made for any of the remaining three vacant district court judgeships. Two U.S. Magistrate Judges, Nan Nolan and Morton Denlow, announced they will retire October 1, 2012. A court-appointed U.S. Magistrate Merit Selection Panel has been reviewing applications for their replacements. The three previous U.S. Bankruptcy Court judicial vacancies were recently filled by Donald R. Cassling, Janet S. Baer, and Timothy A. Barnes, leaving that court with no judicial vacancies.

In 2011, the district court’s total new civil and criminal filings topped the 10,000 mark (10,607). Civil case filings increased 8.2% in 2011 (9,652). Mortgage foreclosures increased more than any other category of cases (209.7%). A total of 1,090 new mortgage cases were filed in 2011. The judges of the court in 2011 conducted a total of 180 civil and criminal jury trials, which was a 22% increase over 2010. Civil jury trials rose 51% in 2011 to a total of 127, compared to 84 civil jury trials in 2010, which was a 41% increase over 2009 when 48 civil jury trials took place. In the three years of 2009 through 2011, civil jury trials increased over 160%. The district court also continues to rank in the top 10% of district courts in efficiency in disposing of civil cases, with a median disposition period of 6.6 months.

The number of criminal defendants charged with felonies decreased 9.2% in 2011, with a total of 955 compared to 1,015 in 2010. New bankruptcy case filings decreased 10% in 2011 to 57,266.

The district court is now in its seventh year of mandatory e-filing, and the process is working smoothly. As of May 1, 2012, the court had 30,500 registered e-filers, a 7% increase over the number on May 1, 2011. The court's web site received approximately 32,000 unique visitors in 2011, and the Clerk's office has established an internal committee to try to make the court's web site even more user friendly.

The security of the E.M. Dirksen U.S. Courthouse continues in the hands of the U.S. Marshals Service as part of a pilot program being conducted in five U.S. District Courts across the country. Preparation to address any issues that may arise as the result of the NATO Summit next week (May 19 - 21) is underway. The GSA's construction of the new Stanley J. Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse in Rockford was to have been completed in November 2010, and will likely be completed soon. Court personnel are hoping to move in and begin conducting court business there in June.

In 2011, the court continued to be a part of two national multi-year pilot programs conducted by the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts, including the "Digital Video Recording Pilot Project" (known commonly as "Cameras in the Courtroom") and the "Patent Pilot Project."

Throughout 2011, the court continued its *pro bono* access to justice programs such as the court's *Pro Se* Help Desk and Settlement Assistance Program. The court also continued to provide *pro bono* appointment opportunities to members of the court's trial bar. The court is presenting its Pro Bono and Public Service Awards Ceremony on May 18, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. in the Parsons Ceremonial Courtroom. The court's James B. Moran Second Chance Reentry Program, which helps ex-offenders live law-abiding lives, is in its second year. A second "graduation" is planned for later this year.

The judges of the court continue to be active on national court governance committees. They also are currently presiding in more than 600 multi-district litigation cases. Several of the court's judges volunteered in 2011 to assist other courts, both trial and appellate, throughout the country.

Many judges on the court in 2011 continued to participate as faculty in numerous continuing legal education programs and at law schools. Additionally, the court continues to make educational materials for high school and junior high students available on the court's web site, for teachers to use in planning student educational field trips to the court.

The E.M. Dirksen U.S. Courthouse was the site of several congressional hearings in 2011 conducted by members of both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. The courthouse was also used by the U.S. Court of Claims and more than a dozen federal agency administrative law judges for hearings.

Foreign Judges and other dignitaries from several foreign countries also made official visits to the court to observe and discuss procedures for providing justice here in the United States.

Chief Judge Holderman thanked the people who work for or with the court for their assistance in the court's administration of justice throughout the past year, and stated that he looked forward to working with them on the challenges the future will bring.