

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 SPEAKS ON THE STATE OF THE COURT

CHICAGO – After a moment of silence in memory of departed Judge James B. Moran, who died on April 21, Chief Judge Holderman said the state of the court was, in a word, “good” and reported the following:

The judicial vacancy created by Judge Mark Filip, who resigned in March 2008, remains unfilled. Two other district judges, Robert Gettleman and David Coar, have announced their intention to take senior status on May 5 and August 12, 2009, respectively, which will result in two additional judicial vacancies on the district court. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman has also expressed his intention to retire later this year.

The district court’s number of civil filings in 2008 (7,681 new cases) is a 2.7% increase over 2007. The court continued to rank in the top 10% of district courts in efficiency in disposing of civil cases, with a median disposition period of 6.2 months.

The number of criminal defendants charged with felonies increased 9.7% in 2008, with a total of 1,015. Bankruptcy filings in 2008 totaled 40,105 cases, an increase of 40% over 2007.

The district court is now in its fourth year of e-filing. As of March 1, 2009, the court had 20,951 registered e-filers, a 20% increase over the number on March 1, 2008. In the summer of 2008, transcripts of court proceedings began to be e-filed in the court records. In early 2009, the district court began transmitting court records to the Seventh Circuit electronically. Petitions for admission to the general bar and trial bar of the court are now accepted on line. The court is participating in a pilot program, which allows jurors to visit the court’s website and not only submit their jury forms, but also get updates on their jury service.

The security of the E.M. Dirksen U.S. Courthouse was placed entirely in the hands of the U.S. Marshal's Service as of January 2009 as part a pilot program being conducted in five U.S. District Courts across the country. The construction of the new U.S. Courthouse in Rockford remains on schedule for completion in late 2010. That courthouse will be named the Stanley J. Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse, thanks to a bill introduced in Congress by Illinois' Senior Senator Dick Durbin.

The court constantly tries to better its procedures through improvements in its local rules, and recently proposed new Local Patent Rules. The public is invited to comment through May 22, 2009.

Throughout 2008, the court continued its *pro bono* access to justice programs such as the court's *Pro Se* Help Desk and Settlement Assistance Program.

The judges of the court continue to be active on national court governance committees. They also are currently presiding in more than 700 multi-district litigation cases and several of the court's judges volunteered in 2008 to assist other courts, both trial and appellate, throughout the country.

Several judges of the court in 2008 continued to participate as faculty in numerous continuing legal education programs and at law schools. Additionally, in the fall of 2008 the court made educational materials for high school and junior high students available on the court's website, 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 2008 conducted by members of both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

Judges and other dignitaries from several foreign countries also made official visits to the court to observe and discuss procedures employed in 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 of the year to come.