

CLERK OF COURT NEWS

Spartanburg, South Carolina

www.spartanburgcounty.org

864-596-2591

2nd Annual, 2011



Message from The Honorable Hope Blackley, Clerk of Court

I am so excited about our 2nd Annual Clerk of Court Newsletter. Since my appointment, I have wanted to keep the public informed and updated on the many changes that have taken place in our office. Since our 1st newsletter, we have implemented more improvements such as: **1) scanning of incoming documents in our General Sessions and Common Pleas Divisions, 2) making of cosmetic improvements to the Circuit Courtrooms, and 3) accepting over-the-counter (OTC) credit card payments in all divisions of the Clerk's Office.**

In our Accounting/Payments Division, we are focusing on distributing "unclaimed funds" to those individuals who may be owed restitution. The Child Support Enforcement and Family Court Divisions are anxiously awaiting the implementation of the state's new Child Support Enforcement System and Family Court Case Management System in the Fall of 2012. Our Family Court Docket has been computerized and in our Scanning Division we're moving forward to get all documents computerized to generate

electronically. Courthouse Security has been beefed up and many new improvements have taken place since our Sheriff has taken over our Detention Center, which also assists with security within the walls of the courthouse.

I hope my mission of restoring public trust and integrity is being felt and seen by all we serve. It is my and my staff's commitment to provide the most effective and efficient service to the residents of Spartanburg County.

Sincerely,

Hope



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Department News

General Sessions Division **Tanya Camp – Supervisor**

Changes are continuing to be made in the General Sessions Division. In July, under the direction of the Clerk of Court, we implemented the process for scanning of documents as they enter our office. This has proven to be very beneficial to our staff. It allows us to retrieve documents much quicker than having to physically pull the file. The scanning process has been and will continue to be a great time saver for both staff and the public. We now have three scanners that we share; we are hopeful that in the near future, we will be able to have one scanner per employee.

Also, there has been a change in the procedure for requesting files from Records Management. We now request files by 10:00am and these files are received by 3:00pm the same day. This has been very beneficial to the Abstractors and staff as well.

Our staff continues to log and bar code evidence for property storage and/or destruction by court order and anticipates completion within a year. We look forward to continued improvements within General Sessions as we progress forward.

Also, in July, The Honorable J. Derham Cole became our Administrative Judge. Judge Cole has implemented some changes in the creating, scheduling, and maintaining of the criminal docket.

We are proud to mention that we have more professional décor! We have been fortunate to have the attorney's tables refurbished and the chairs re-upholstered in each of our courtrooms.

New employees & transfers to General Sessions are:

Joey Shook

Common Pleas Division **Pat Gotautas – Interim Supervisor**

Many changes have occurred in the Common Pleas Division. This division was divided from General Sessions to be supervised separately and to promote effectiveness. Pat Gotautas has been appointed supervisor for better oversight and management.

In the Common Pleas Division, we are working hard to learn the new scanning system. This will make it easier to access filings through the computer instead of having to actually stop and pull files. This new system also gives us the capability of e-mailing the scanned documents when deemed appropriate. Furthermore, this new system will enable staff to serve the public more efficiently.

There is also a new Civil Action Form 4 that will be available on our website (SpartanburgCounty.org). This form has been specifically designed for use by attorneys and provides more detailed information that will help our office to record more accurately the outcome of a hearing or a case.

New employees & transfers Common Pleas are:

Dayonna Moore*

*Denotes employee is a transfer from one division to another within the Clerk's Office.

Accounting/Payments Division **Lisa Coleman – Supervisor**

Clerk Blackley has implemented many changes in the Clerk of Court's Accounting/Payment Division. One major change in this division is the accepting of over-the-counter (OTC) credit card payments. Clients can now make OTC credit card payments, as well as by cash, check, or money orders. Payments can be made in Family Court, General Sessions, and Common Pleas Divisions.

The distribution of "unclaimed funds" continues to be a priority within the Clerk of Court's Office.

Over the past year, the Clerk of Court's Office has identified and paid several recipients of unclaimed funds. As required by state law, all unclaimed funds have been turned over to the State Treasurer. Individuals may inquire about unclaimed funds by contacting the State Treasurer at 1-803-737-4771 or at www.treasurer.sc.gov.

The Clerk of Court's Office began the process of identifying unclaimed funds for individuals that may be entitled to restitution. We identified these recipients until we reached the state's deadline of November 1, 2011. Individuals may contact the State Treasurer to inquire about unclaimed funds at 1-803-737-4771 or at www.treasurer.sc.gov.

In December 2010, the Clerk of Court's Accounting/Payment Division began to offer direct deposit for child support and alimony receipts. Direct deposit has given child support and alimony recipients the option to have their payments securely deposited directly into their bank account, instead of receiving a check in the mail. Currently, the Clerk of Court has over 1,500 recipients signed up for direct deposit, and we continue to have additional recipients sign up for this service daily.

Child Support Enforcement
Division
Kelly McKinney – Supervisor

The Child Support Office has been working with Department of Social Services to complete and close all the old cases on our system to ensure more time to work on active cases.

As of July 20, 2011, the SC Court Administration amended the Child Support Rules Affidavit to include a Notice of Hearing. This is sent out to notify the defendant that their inability to pay is now a defense. The defendants can come into the Child Support Enforcement Office before court to fill out a financial declaration or go online at www.judicial.state.sc.us to complete the form and bring it to court with them.

Also, we are very excited about a new computer system that is coming in 2012. The Child Support Enforcement System (CSES) that we are getting statewide will allow the Child Support Office faster, more accurate enforcement of child support cases. Furthermore, we will be able to get more information than ever before on non-custodial parents in an effort to collect more money for the children.

New employees & transfers to Child Support Enforcement Division are:

Maribel Martinez*

Kierra Sims

*Denotes employee is a transfer from one division to another within the Clerk's Office.

Family Court Division
Cindi Whitenight – Supervisor

An upcoming change in Family Court is a new statewide computer system in the next year. The Family Court Case Management System (FCCMS) will enable the Clerk's Office to communicate better with Child Support Enforcement offices statewide. Also, it will also enable the docket to scan files in and out for court. Once the system is set up, it will automatically post files to the docket and the case. This system will inform us if we have an order of protection for an attorney or if we have already scheduled an attorney at the same day and time. We are looking forward to implementing this new system so that we can be more efficient.

Another change in Family Court is the judgment in a Family Court case (Form 4F). This form is completed by the attorney and signed by the Judge, informing the Clerk's Office what was ordered, such as: child support, appointed attorney, end the case, dismiss the case, etc. This form has enabled us to process the orders much faster and more efficiently. This change took effect October 1, 2011.

Lastly, the Family Court Docket has gone paperless! In the last 6 months, the docket has been changed from paper dockets to being completely online. This allows the Clerk's Office to schedule cases while pre-trials are in session. The public will be able to view the docket 30 days in advance.

New employees & transfers to Family Court Division are:

Kimberly McKinney*
Delia K. Hunter*

*Denotes employee is a transfer from one division to another within the Clerk's Office.

Scanning Division

Great progress is being made in the Clerk of Court Scanning Department!

The primary purpose of the Scanning Department is to provide an electronic back-up to all original paperwork created within a file to be viewed via computer. Once all documents are scanned, access will be granted for public viewing while the original documents are safely stored away at Total Records Management (TRIM).

New employees & transfers to Scanning Division are:

Morgan Ring

Courthouse Security

On March 21, 2011, Sergeant Corey C. Cole, Sr. was appointed Security Manager of Spartanburg County Courthouse. This position was created by Chuck Wright, Sheriff of Spartanburg County, Judge Derham Cole, and Hope Blackley, Clerk of Court, Spartanburg, SC. In addition to the responsibilities of previous court supervisors, the Security Manager is responsible for security at the County Administrative Offices.

Sergeant Cole joined the Army after high school serving as an Intelligence Analyst for 3 ½ years. After military service, Sergeant Cole joined the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office as a uniformed Patrol Officer, then worked in the Narcotics Division for 6 years prior to coming to Courthouse Security.

Sergeant Cole currently supervises a Security Team that is comprised of 24 veteran officers. Their duties range from securing the physical entrances to the courthouse to securing the safety and protection of the judges, employees, and citizens. Also, he oversees the distribution of the newly implemented rekeying of the courthouse by the Clerk of Court.

After assuming the duties of Security Manager, Sergeant Cole implemented an Emergency Operation Plan for the courthouse, which he spearheaded with the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the Fire Marshall/Fire Department and Emergency Preparedness.

In May 2011, Sergeant Cole coordinated a three day security plan for the Circuit Court Judges' Annual Meeting in Spartanburg, SC.

Congratulations are in order for Sergeant Cole, and we wish him well.

IN THE KNOW.....

Other information to keep you in the know is the addition of Juror Information on our website. We have added information that will be helpful to potential jurors prior to their arrival at the courthouse. With the assistance of our Information Technologies Department, we have been working on adding a feature to our website allowing the Jury Pool to get their juror information each day in addition to having our Juror Information phone line.

Also, we have started printing our own Juror Information Pamphlets as well as Juror Parking Vouchers implemented by Clerk Blackley. We have found that this will save the county money by saving on printing costs.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.

Confucius

TRIVIA QUIZ

1. What did blind bank robber David Worrell use as a weapon when trying to rob a London bank?
2. Who averaged one patent every three weeks of his life?
3. What element begins with the letter "K"?
4. What is the least popular month for U.S. weddings?
5. Who wrote the song "White Christmas"?

6. The airline Augusta comes from what country?
7. What US Congressman had roles in Hairspray and Airplane II before winning his seat in congress?
8. What pilot was the first to suffer a passenger fatality in 1908?
9. What congressional award was Dr. Mary Walker the first woman to receive?
10. What civil rights leader did Dorothy Parker leave the bulk of her estate to?

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. His Cane
2. Thomas Edison
3. Krypton
4. January
5. Irving Berlin
6. Australia
7. Sonny Bono
8. Orville Wright
9. Medal of Honor
10. Martin Luther King, Jr.



IN MEMORY OF

We had two former bailiffs that passed away this year. We would like to honor them for their service to the Clerk of Court Office.

Harold L. Miller
July 9, 1929 – March 24, 2011

Albert Joseph Cottonaro
July, 1921 - March 28, 2011

The Clerk of Courts Office would like to wish
you and your family Happy Holidays!



2011 Employee of the Year



Cindy Parris General Sessions Docket Clerk

It is with great pleasure that the Spartanburg County Courthouse recognizes Cindy Parris, as Employee of the Year.

Cindy has been a full-time employee of the Clerk of Court's Office since January 19, 2009, and is known for her high standard of performance. She treats everyone with respect and dignity and is a great asset to this office, as well as the local community.

The energy and enthusiasm with which she goes about her life are remarkable. Cindy emulates warmth, humility, and compassion, as she serves, and always expresses appreciation to others for their efforts.

We are grateful to have her, as Spartanburg County employee and appreciate all that she does.



**Cindy Parris
Employee of the Year, 2011**