



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**By: Marcia Travis**

## **New Teleconferencing Program to Debut at Oakland Circuit Court Judge On-Line Will Allow Court Matters, Hearings to be Handled by Telephone**

Oakland County, Mich., Thursday, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> – The Sixth Judicial Circuit Court has one thing to tell attorneys – yes, they CAN hear you now.

Beginning Monday, Oct. 27, the Oakland County Circuit Court will offer attorneys and parties in some cases the option of handling court hearings and other matters by telephone conferencing as part of a pilot program.

Called **Judge On-Line**, the new service is being offered as an alternative to face-to-face court hearings. It is designed especially for scheduling, status, pretrial and settlement conferences, as well as motion hearings and other court proceedings at the discretion of the presiding judge. Parties and attorneys may appear for these court events from work, home, and while on vacation for a non-refundable \$30 convenience fee.

Court officials said the new service will save attorneys and litigants travel time and fuel costs and help manage the court docket more effectively. Judges participating in the pilot program are Judges Steven Andrews, Martha Anderson, Rae Lee Chabot, Shalina Kumar, Colleen O'Brien, Edward Sosnick and Joan Young.

“This is a win-win for the courts and the entire legal community,” said Chief Judge Wendy Potts. “Judge On-Line is our initial foray into what will become a full-fledged interactive and state-of-the-art audio and video conferencing program. We want to be sure that parties and attorneys embrace the concept of a ‘virtual’ court appearance through telephone conferencing. When that happens, it’s full steam ahead toward interactive video that will save both litigants and attorneys time and money.”

(more)

Potts said Judge On-Line will help promote effective docket management by moving cases faster through the system to completion because there will be fewer adjournments due to scheduling conflicts. Oakland County's 19 Circuit judges handle more than 30,000 cases annually. With today's constantly evolving technologies, audio conferencing is the preface to the courts becoming equipped with interactive video conferencing, she said.

Judge On-Line dovetails nicely with Oakland County's blueprint of developing innovative technology to improve government functions and enhance service for residents and local municipalities.

"We continue to bring technology into the daily work of county government," Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said. "The county has spent the past 16 years investing in technology to improve government and the courts, making them more accessible for the public while reducing costs. This is another exciting example."

Several prominent Oakland County attorneys, who attended a live demonstration of Judge On-Line this morning, spoke of the convenience and cost savings that they and their clients will experience. News of the program's imminent launch was well-received.

"It's a tremendous idea whose time has come," exclaimed Michael Schloff, President of the Oakland County Bar Association. "A superb way to streamline many of the routine courtroom activities that only involve five or ten minutes."

To view the [Judge On - Line Request Form](#), click the highlighted link.

Circuit Court's Case Management Office at 248-858-0351.

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