



# NEWS RELEASE

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

**Oakland County, MI** (February 12, 2009) – The Sixth Judicial Circuit Court has one thing to tell attorneys – yes, they CAN hear you now.

The Oakland County Circuit Court now offers attorneys and parties in many cases the option of handling court hearings and other matters by telephone conferencing.

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. All requests for proceedings to be heard via telephone conferencing must be made to the chambers of the assigned judge. For a civil/criminal division matter, the request must be made at least seven days prior to the event. If the request is approved, the party requesting must call opposing counsel to inform them of their request and ask if they also would like to participate in telephone conferencing. Opposing counsel will have four days prior to the event to make their request to chambers. For a family division matter, the request must be made to chambers at least four days prior to the event. Under special circumstances and at the judge's discretion, a request made to chambers in fewer days may be granted. Each participant must submit a Judge On-Line Request Form and remit payment to the Case Management Office.

“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.”

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 recently attended a live demonstration of Judge On-Line, spoke of the convenience and cost savings that they and their clients will experience. News of the program 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.”

For more information, visit the Circuit Court’s web site at [www.oakgov.com/courts/jol/](http://www.oakgov.com/courts/jol/) or call the Circuit Court’s Case Management Office at 248-858-0351.